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ABSTRACT

This monograph examines fundamental themes of equality and democracy prominent in Australian educational discourse and reform efforts during the past century, particularly since World War II. The first section argues that these ideals, while representing positive and progressive intentions, have not contributed to social justice but have led to educational outcomes inconsistent with democratic principles. In fact, Australian education has generally fostered social control rather than social mobility. Subsequent sections attempt to explain the Australian public's persistent acceptance of social and economic inequalities despite educational reforms intended to ameliorate these problems. The theoretical concepts of ideology, meritocracy, reproduction, and hegemony are discussed in relation to established school practices contributing to discrimination against minority children. The essay concludes by discussing ways to make genuine democracy and equality more central in school practices and curricula. Appended are 63 references. Four supporting readings include: "The School--The Institution and Its Controlling Bureaucracy" (B. Bessant), "Letter to an Alternative Teacher" (Bill Hannan); "Crisis of Legitimation: Schools, Society, and Declining Faith in Education" (Svi Shapiro); "Class, Gender and Livelihood? Some Implications for Education" (Johanna Wyn and Bruce Wilson). Also included is an annotated bibliography of 11 references. (MLH)

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Schooling for social order: democracy, equality and social mobility in education

LAWRENCE ANGUS

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Sociology of the school

Schooling for social order: democracy, equality and social mobility in education

LAWRENCE ANGUS

Deakin University

Deakin University

This book forms part of the EED423 *Sociology of the School* course offered by the School of Education in Deakin University's Open Campus Program. It has been prepared for the EED423 *Sociology of the School* course team.

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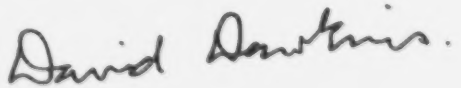
Series introduction

One feature of education is the gap that exists between academic interests and teacher practice. The theoretical and research interests of academics, on the one hand, are not readily available to teachers; the practical concerns of teachers, on the other hand, may not be taken account of by academics.

It is hoped that this series of monographs will provide a link between academic thought and research and the practice of teaching. Each volume in the series discusses contemporary educational issues and research in a way that can inform educational practice. They do not provide a set of prescriptive recommendations, but present a discussion of theory and research with the intention of highlighting the implications for educational practice in a way that can inform teachers.

The issues discussed in this monograph series include: the relationship between the political and economic institutions of society and the education system, suggesting a link between socio-political conditions and educational policies and programs; the experience of teaching, emphasising the importance of the self-concept of teachers in their socialisation into a professional role; ethnicity and multicultural policy, suggesting that these are best understood in terms of social class and what this might mean for teachers; a view of gender-related inequalities in education that suggests that these are best understood in terms of ideology about the family; the impact of new technology on society and the implications this may have for education; and the possibilities that confront the education system and the practising teacher.

It is hoped that these monographs will clarify some of the complex issues confronting educationists and will stimulate thought and discussion among teachers that will inform their own practice and add to the continuing debate.



David Dawkins
Course team chairperson

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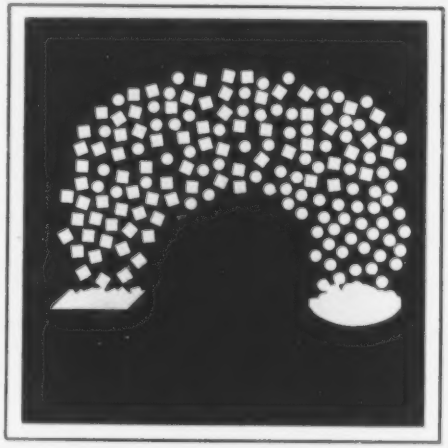
Schooling for social order: Democracy, equality and social mobility in education



Introduction

This monograph examines fundamental themes of equality and democracy that have been prominent in educational discourse and educational reform in Australia during the past century and, particularly, since the Second World War. I argue in the following section that these ideals, while they represent positive and progressive intentions, have not contributed to greater social justice but have led to educational outcomes that in important ways are inconsistent with underlying principles of democracy and equality. Subsequent sections attempt to explain the persistence and general acceptance by the Australian public of social and economic inequalities, despite educational reforms which have been intended to ameliorate such inequality. The theoretical concepts of ideology, meritocracy, reproduction and hegemony are discussed in relation to established school practices. I argue that such practices contribute to institutionalised cultural discrimination in schools against children from non-dominant groups. This introductory essay concludes with a discussion of ways in which genuine democracy and equality might be made more central in school practices and curriculum.

Themes in Australian education

My essential argument in this monograph is that education in Australia has generally served purposes of social control. This is not to deny, however, that many education reformers have advocated policies which they hoped would liberate and enlighten citizens. For the reformers, in particular, a number of important ideas have been prominent in the rhetoric which has justified the development of mass education in Australia. The purpose of this section is to explore some of the positive and negative aspects of several of these central themes: democracy, social harmony, equality and social mobility.

Democracy

The involvement of Australian colonial governments in education became increasingly evident in the second half of the nineteenth century and was justified on the grounds that the common good of citizens would be advanced by the spread of a common system of elementary education in each of the states. Such a claim brought the State into conflict with the churches, especially the Catholic Church, which maintained a limited number of elementary schools and several exclusive secondary schools in order to instruct children in morals and religious practice. In the liberal democratic vision of late-Victorian Australia, however, only a 'free, compulsory and secular' system of education, it was argued, could mould appropriate future citizens who would maintain democratic ideals (Grundy 1972). Such an education would take into account fundamental liberal concepts of individual rights, social justice and equality of opportunity (Bates 1985). Under such a uniform public system, according to the rhetoric of the time, schools could erode the divisive barriers of class and religious differences by promoting a common code of citizenship and public

standards. The extension of popular, universal education was advocated in each of the colonies as an essential prerequisite for the formation of a democratic society with an informed and dutiful citizenry (Grundy 1972; Butts 1955; Gregory 1973). For if a liberal, unified and progressive society were to be built in Australia, according to a Victorian reformer of the 1860s:

> the State has a duty beyond the mere duty of educating the people so as to escape the dock. It is bound to educate them so as to make them fit for the ballot box, and the political duties which in after life they may be called upon to perform.
>
> (Henry Wrixon, in *Victorian Parlimentary Debates*, 1869, quoted in Gregory 1973, p. 128)

This statement, typical of many that were made in public debates about education in the second half of the nineteenth century and since then, contains a number of assumptions about the beneficiaries of schooling. Although education was to be extended to all, the essential targets of free, compulsory and secular education were clearly the 'meaner' classes who lacked both gentility and, it was felt by the paternal reformers, a sense of civic concern. And while it was assumed that the children, at least the males, of the uneducated masses, although 'rough', could be picked up and dusted off sufficiently to play a part in a democratic society, they were to be educated to accept an extremely narrow conception of democracy and the part they would play in it. The logic behind education for a democratic society was, quite simply, 'If you gave every man the vote then you had to educate every man to use it' (Gregory 1973, p. 132). The common man was to be educated into a social order in which enlightened, responsible citizens would partake in the process of democratic elections. The notion of democratic participation here, however, was limited to that of involvement in the electoral system itself. The populace was viewed, then as now, as relatively passive bystanders in the political process. Only a relatively few concerned citizens with particular interests or political determination might seek intensive involvement in politics through political party or interest group membership. The majority would vote in elections and then, by and large, withdraw from the political arena until it was time to vote again.

Another assumption contained in the late ninteenth-century rhetoric of educational reform, one that is related to a narrow conception of democracy, is that raw, uneducated working-class youths were likely to drift into a life of idleness and crime without the intervention of a benevolent state. Again, according to Wrixon:

> with our rising generation reared under political institutions such as we enjoy we must not be told that we are to educate them merely for the purpose of keeping them from crime, when we know that when they grow up they may have to determine the most vital questions that can affect the welfare of their country.
>
> (Wrixon, quoted in Gregory 1973, p. 128)

Citizens who were expected to play their part, however prescribed and minimal, in the political process, it was argued, must first be educated in industrious habits and a shared view of public order.

Social harmony

Schooling, offered to all children on an equal basis, was thought by turn-of-the-century reformers to be the most appropriate means by which a moral consensus, a shared commitment to the social order, would be established. By means of education, the criminal and anti-social proclivities of the children of the 'lower' classes would be curbed. Schools would induct such children into the value system of the prevailing social order and so turn out 'intelligent and prosperous citizens rather than beggarly and riotous rogues' (quoted in Bessant 1975, p. 84). The *status quo* would not be challenged because children would be educated in conformity and self-restraint. The various Education Acts and regulations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were aimed at producing state education systems which would be models of efficiency in creating a literate and domesticated public.

The institutionalisation of children in schools in which there was rigid control of pupils, teachers and curriculum, as well as administration, was to ensure that rising generations would be socialised into acceptance of the prevailing order. Through increasing regulation and supervision during the early twentieth century, the transition from youth to adulthood was to be managed so as to produce worthy contributors to a social and economic order which was not itself to be questioned. As a South Australian school inspector put it in 1928:

> The fact that children of today will be the citizens of tomorrow should ever be kept in mind by the teacher. For surely, it is not too much to expect that the habits of willing obedience to constituted authority, and of regard for the rights of others, now being formed in our schools, may promote communal peace in the future and become, in some measure, the solvent of much of the social unrest existing today.
>
> (quoted in Bessant 1975, p. 88)

Educators were given a mission of civilising the wayward children from the unruly elements of society so that they would not threaten the social fabric. Social mores were not seen as being connected with politics or ideology but merely self-evident characteristics of a responsible, decent citizenry. In fact, strenuous efforts were made to ensure that politics was kept out of education. Teachers, in particular, were forbidden to express any political views in the classroom, or indeed to discuss in schools any matters of controversy. In short, during the first half of the twentieth century and beyond, as Bessant (1975) explains: 'It was taken for granted by administrators, teachers and all but the most radical politicians that the school was a bastion of the status quo. The call for political neutrality in the school was in fact an insurance against any questioning of the social order in the classrooms' (p. 89). Teachers were expected to be obedient, unquestioning, morally impeccable, utterly 'neutral' public servants who conformed to prevailing social values. They were to remain aloof from the issues of the day, maintain good discipline, keep exactly to the prescribed syllabus and employ the 'appropriate' methods of teaching to gain 'good' examination results. Initiative was not required by the teacher and could even be a handicap in the efficient provision of education in a hierarchical system. Children, for their part, were to learn basic literacy

and numeracy, loyalty to country and empire, obedience to authority, and acceptance of the *status quo*. The last of these was to be all the more effectively taught to children and their parents if they could believe that the prevailing social order offered them some possibility of advancement in terms of their relative economic position.

Equality and social mobility

A tradition in Australian educational reform since before the turn of the century has been one of attempting to extend the advantages of education to the more disadvantaged members of society. The egalitarian ideal held that universal education, the same for all, would provide *all* children with an opportunity of advancing their station in life. The provision of educational opportunities for the children of the poor was also seen as something of a safety valve which would relieve the social pressures built up by class conflict. If it were generally accepted that the ambitious and the industrious amongst the lower classes could, because of the upward mobility afforded by educational success, grasp a share of the good life, then the likelihood of class conflict would be greatly reduced. As Ely (1978) argues: 'The turbulence of the "have-nots" was weakened by limited but real opportunities offered to their natural leaders—the more ambitious and able. The price of such opportunity has been their willing acceptance of respectable, consensus, conditional 'middle-class' society' (p. 2). In this way, while one might argue with Ely's notion of 'natural leaders', 'the educational facilities offered to the upwardly mobile have generally guaranteed their cooperation rather than confrontation with their betters' (Ely 1978, p. 2).

The themes of social control and social mobility, then, are inextricably interrelated in the history of mass education in Australia. Social mobility was offered *within* an existing social order which was not itself to be examined as part of the educational enterprise. Contradictory intentions, which have characterised educational reforms up to the present day, are apparent in this limited view of social advancement. On the one hand, the early reformers held strongly to the aim of assisting, above all, the lowliest children. On the other hand, the education system was to entrench a social hierarchy which preserved disadvantage and legitimated inequality, and which could be climbed by children of the lower classes only if they became like their 'betters'. As has been the case many times in our history, the problems of the poor were defined as the impetus for reform, but the interests that were served by the reforms were those of the dominant group in society.

Although the rhetoric of equality and social opportunity was common in the first half of the twentieth century, especially the early decades, the principle of general social advancement through education was not universally shared. There were still many who saw little point in children being educated above their station. Such education was thought by some to be generally futile, and even harmful, particularly for girls of common stock (Porter 1986). As one Member of Parliament, Mr P. Madden, put it:

> I think it is a mistake to teach people more than is required for their station. Indeed it is a cruelty. Take, for instance, the girl whose place is that of a

dairymaid. Is it not cruel to teach her accomplishments which make her above her station?

Dr Maloney. —Why?

Mr P. Madden. Because she will leave her dairy, come to town, fail to get employment, and perhaps go on to the streets.

(quoted in Bessant 1975, p. 99)

Such attitudes impeded the growth of public secondary education until after the Second World War. Primary education, however, was another matter. There were few objections to basic instruction for the masses. A few years of schooling would help to create a literate and numerate workforce and to strengthen the moral order of society.

The notion of education for social advancement, while prominent in the thinking and rhetoric of the reformers, was not widely accepted by the general public until after the Second World War. Before that time, the division between education and work was rather blurred for most children, as few saw any direct connection between their school performance and their chances of getting a good job. Jobs were gained through family and social contacts, or by being in the right place at the right time, rather than by the recommendation of a school report. Moreover, many working-class children moved freely between school and work, either paid or as part of a family unit, during their school careers. This was especially the case in the opening decades of the century, as it was not until between 1910 and 1920 that the notion of compulsory, in 'free, compulsory and secular', was extended in the various states to mean that attendance was required on every school day. Before that, children were expected to attend school for about two-thirds of the days on which it was open. A child's examination results were then often as much influenced by the number of days she or he attended school as by her or his ability. Social and economic opportunities, despite the rhetoric of reformers, had more to do with family status and connections than academic ability. In any case, as I shall argue in the following sections, the notion of 'academic' ability was also skewed to favour the already socially and economically advantaged.

It was not until the post-war years, when some secondary education increasingly became the norm for most children, that the notion of social advancement through education became widely accepted at all social levels. Hence more and more children stayed longer and longer at school as educational qualifications became devalued over time. This has meant that the concept of equality of opportunity was always flawed, because many families who needed to supplement family income were hard pressed to allow children who could get any jobs at all to stay on at school after the minimum leaving age in order to accumulate the qualifications that might enable them to gain better jobs. Nevertheless, it was during this era that the idea of education as a social leveller became widespread as many parents wished their children to take advantage of educational opportunities that had not been available to themselves. Through education, it was thought, children of all ranks could compete for economic success.

Schools and ideology

So far I have briefly examined the emergence of certain themes in the history of education in Australia. These themes—democracy, social control, social mobility and equality—I argued, are connected to the prevailing notion that education and schools are themselves politically neutral. It is important to be clear about what I mean by 'political' in this context. Schools were traditionally seen as being politically neutral not only in the sense that politics, i.e. party politics and issues of controversy, were to be kept out of the classroom, but also in the sense that schools, teachers and curricula were believed to serve no vested interests. Public education was regarded as a public service which was offered for the benefit of all citizens and for the good of society as a whole. This view of education as a public good, of which all could equally avail themselves, was reinforced in the legitimating academic discourse of social science and educational administration which was dominated by structural functionalism and concerns about technical efficiency. The *aims* of mass schooling, to fit children for economic production and to maintain the moral order, were not be be questioned. Educational improvement, therefore, referred to ways of doing this more effectively. Educational resources were the physical artefacts (personnel, buildings, timetables, equipment, space) that could be deployed in the attempt to 'educate' more effectively. For if the goals as well as the practices of education could be regarded as legitimate and non-problematic, then education and educational administration could be regarded as a scientific, objective enterprise (Angus 1986a).

The very notion of 'education' that is used here is itself both an historical and a political construct. Despite the recurring theme in liberal rhetoric that politics should be kept out of education (and vice versa), education is inherently political because, as Hall (1977) explains, 'education exists in the most complex and intimate relationship to other processes in society, and . . . it can never be isolated from those forces' (p. 5). As I have argued, mass schooling in Australia has traditionally been regarded as a means to fit people for their various functions in the stable economic and social order. Such 'education', as Lundgren (1983) points out, does over time 'establish a certain pattern of thought about what education *should* be—which later assumes a more significant role as it becomes a tradition and as the state comes to play an increasingly active part in the provision of schooling' (p. 144). This means that in a society that is socially and economically differentiated like Australia's:

> the content of education involved a choice of values, knowledge and skills. There was no given body of knowledge and values to be transmitted: a choice had to be made and was made, and it was one which reflected the positions of power held by various groups in the society. Compulsory education meant not only subordination as regards the common values and knowledge of society, but also subordination to the values and knowledge of the dominating social strata.
>
> (Lundgren 1983, p. 145)

Once this fact that education involves choices between competing values, competing interests and, indeed, competing cultures is recognised, we are in a position to appreciate Lundgren's essential point that

> the content, and the prerequisites, which come to direct the actual processes of education and socialization are determined by the power held by various social strata and social classes *vis-à-vis* education. The choice of an equal education for all also means a choice of a given interpretation of society and culture.
>
> (Lundgren 1983, p. 149)

What this means is that education is inescapably ideological. That is, education as a part of life in a society contributes to our beliefs and dreams of what is 'true, desirable and possible' (Berlak & Berlak 1983, p. 271), both for ourselves and for society. Ideology in this sense refers to 'the relatively formal and articulate system of meanings, values and beliefs that legitimate and justify culture as it is' (Berlak & Berlak 1983, p. 271). The link between prevailing views of education, meritocracy and ideology is clearly articulated by Berlak and Berlak:

> Ideologies . . . portray existing social arrangements as given, as beyond human control, and as benefiting everyone by casting the interests of dominant groups as congruent with the public interest . . . The meritocratic ideology presents particular forms of work and human preoccupations as more valuable and deserving of greater status and economic reward, and the existing hierarchical social arrangements and enormous discrepancies in wealth and power as normal, legitimate and fair.
>
> (Berlak & Berlak 1983, p. 271)

Within this view, education is seen essentially as a mechanical accumulation of marks and certificates that may lead to positions in the hierarchy. In individual competition with their peers, children pursue academic achievement and personal gain.

Equality and meritocracy

By the 1950s the major themes outlined in the previous sections had become entrenched in the educational discourse which legitimated public education. Education was generally regarded as a means to promote democracy, social harmony, social mobility and equality. Public confidence in and support for education grew to the point that

> The mid-1960s represented the high point of faith in education and the expectations of that period now seem hopelessly unreal, even ludicrous. Education was expected to establish an equal society, maintain economic growth and promote national prosperity, while at the same time providing everyone with higher incomes, interesting jobs and a pleasant middle-class life.
>
> (Bennett 1982, p. 165)

The language of such educational discourse reflects a somewhat limited world-view which regarded individual achievement within the prevailing educational and social order as a measure of individual worth. This view was the cornerstone of the doctrine of equality of opportunity upon which the entire edifice of meritocracy rested.

It is important to recognise that behind the principle of meritocracy, a principle which is still prominent in the prevailing liberal assumptions about schooling, lies a positive and humane hope that education may serve as a equalising force in society. Although education, in this perspective, is a competitive, individualistic process, children of talent from all social backgrounds, no matter how deprived, are given the *same* opportunity to succeed. Thus, it is claimed, education may play a part in breaking down inherited privilege and entrenched patterns in the distribution of power and wealth in society.

The point is that, despite the positive intentions of supporters of equality of opportunity, the overwhelming evidence is that at the societal level, at the level of general tendencies in overall outcomes, educational success is closely associated with family wealth and advantage (Coleman et al. 1966; Jencks 1972). This is not to deny of course that many individuals, children of poor families, migrants, girls, have managed against the odds, as it were, to achieve both successful school careers and then commercial or professional careers. Such individual exceptions to the general tendency are important in at least two ways. Firstly, they illustrate that there is a complex relationship between negative and positive outcomes of traditional, liberal schooling. Some children may, for one reason or another, benefit from an overall system which is generally inadequate. But even such individual 'successes' do nothing to ameliorate the inequalities that are sustained within the social hierarchy which is not challenged by minor alterations of individual places within it. Secondly, and related to the first point, examples of individual mobility *legitimate* both traditional school practices and the social order. That is, under the guise of equality of opportunity, education contributes to a form of social control which preserves social and economic inequality.

There is yet another level at which the policy of equality of opportunity is functional in maintaining the social and economic order. Economic efficiency can be best served by a meritocracy in which children of ability from all social classes can compete on their merits so that the very ablest from society as a whole can reach the 'top'. The essence of meritocracy was that

> Schools were to be reformed in such a way that they could serve as instruments for evening up 'educational opportunities', redistributing them more effectively and fairly. Both words are important. 'Fairly' meant that schools should provide the means whereby a measure of redistribution of educational chances among social classes could be affected. 'Effectively' meant that this redistribution would enable the recruitment of able students from the existing 'pool of talent'.
>
> (Hall 1977, p. 32)

Meritocratic ideology has been increasingly attacked by a number of critics during the past decade (e.g. Apple 1982; Bourdieu 1977; Spring 1980). These critics argue that, contrary to the prevailing liberal view, life chances are not so much promoted by schools as restricted by them. Schools are not regarded as neutral arenas in which all children start out with equal chances in the competition for the technical knowledge and credentials that may lead to social advancement and future income.

Instead, rather than holding out equal opportunities for individual mobility as promised by liberal theorists, schools are thought to maintain and reproduce both a system of structured inequality over time and also a dominant ideology which offers those dispossessed of political and economic power nothing more than an assurance that the competition is 'fair'.

The above assertions should not be accepted uncritically. We must be prepared to critically examine the intentions of traditional liberal schooling against educational outcomes. Under such critical scrutiny both negative and positive elements of formerly taken-for-granted features of education may become apparent. And, as Hall perceptively points out,

> the relationship between the negative and the positive—the latent and manifest—results of schooling may not be random; there may be connections between them. Some groups may be contained, constrained, forced, won, or 'socialized' into a 'subordinate' position in society *because* some others are pushed, won or 'socialized' into 'dominant' positions.
>
> (Hall 1977, p. 10)

Moreover, any attempt to understand, much less reform, the education system in a complex industrial society must search for the connections between schooling and other aspects of society, such as the economic system, the job market, the organisation of work, the distribution of power, the distribution of high-status knowledge (Angus 1986b). By understanding the essentiality of educational processes and social processes we can begin to appreciate the powerful part played by schools in the maintenance and transmission of educational and social inequalities. Such is the starting point for theories of reproduction and hegemony which attempt to explain education's contribution to the reproduction of the social hierarchy.

Reproduction and hegemony

Radical educational theorists (Apple 1982; Giroux 1983; Spring 1980; Young 1971) attempt to look beneath the superficial facade of 'agreed truths' and taken-for-granted assumptions about educational 'reality'. Indeed, it is the very taken-for-grantedness of structures and processes in education that radical critics of the traditional liberal position concerning the relationship between schools and society have attempted to undermine and expose as a force which carries capitalist ideology and which subtly promotes social and economic reproduction. As Giroux writes of the work of these critics in recent years:

> radical educators presented a serious challenge to the discourse and logic of liberal views of schooling. But they did more than that. They also tried to fashion a new discourse and set of understandings around the reproduction thesis. Schools were stripped of their political innocence and connected to the social and cultural matrix of capitalist rationality.
>
> (Giroux 1983, p. 258)

The reproduction thesis has two main variants. Firstly, schools were argued to contribute to economic reproduction in that they provided different educational experiences for children depending upon their class

and social group. Because children acquire in school different attitudes, knowledge and skills that are needed for their respective places in a stratified labour force, the forces of production are reproduced through the legitimation of the divisions of labour and divisions of knowledge (Bowles & Gintis 1976; Braverman 1974). The correspondence principle of Bowles & Gintis (1976), for instance, stresses the structural correspondence between schooling and economic production. As they explain:

> The educational system helps integrate youth into the economic system, we believe, through a structural correspondence between its social relations and those of production. The structure of social relations in education not only inures the student to the discipline of the work place, but develops the type of personal demeanor, modes of self-presentation, self-image, and social-class identifications which are crucial ingredients of job adequacy. Specifically, the social relationships in education . . . replicate the hierarchical division of labor.
>
> (Bowles & Gintis 1976, p. 131)

Students therefore emerge from schools with different attitudes and skills, already allocated, by and large, to their 'proper' places in a hierarchical society and workforce. And, more importantly, because the *maintenance* of structural inequality over time demands that differential class relations within the workplace be accepted as normal and natural, the allocation process takes place primarily in schools, which legitimate economic and social stratification.

Secondly, schools are regarded as being reproductive, also, in a cultural sense through the reinforcement in schools of predominant ideology and culture so that they are taken for granted as legitimate (Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron 1977; Giroux 1981). That is, social reproduction occurs through a form of cultural reproduction as the privileged position of economically dominant families is transmitted by means of the academic success of their children whose 'cultural capital' equips them to take advantage of the 'equal' educational opportunities that are afforded by schooling.

Most importantly, reproduction theorists argue that the liberal educational system legitimates and reproduces capitalist rationality through 'the control of meaning, through the manipulation of the very categories and modes of thinking we commonsensically use' (Sarup 1984, p. 2). As Giroux argues:

> reproductive rationality . . . focusses its attention upon macro-structural relationships and how these relations in the form of structural determinations shape, as well as limit, the actions of human beings. Unlike traditional functionalist accounts, which are also concerned with the ways institutions shape society, reproductive positions reject consensus as the normative glue of a social system; instead, they focus on the way in which dominant classes are able to reproduce existing power relations in an unjust and unequal society.
>
> (Giroux 1981, p. 13)

Both economic reproduction and cultural reproduction perpetuate inequality under the semblance of fairness and equal opportunity as schools are regarded as merely neutral transmitters of 'the benefits of a valued culture' (Giroux 1983, p. 267). Therefore:

> According to Bourdieu, it is precisely the relative autonomy of the educational system that 'enables it to serve external demands under the guise of independence and neutrality, i.e., to conceal the social functions it performs and so to perform them more effectively'.
>
> (Giroux 1983, pp. 267–8).

The supposed 'objectivity' and 'neutrality' of generally accepted educational practices is regarded by radical educators as being completely mythical (Papagiannis et al. 1982). Thus, although there are important differences in specific approaches, schools are criticised as one of society's most important cultural apparatuses which work to maintain the *status quo* and to restrict the development of working-class consciousness. Similar arguments can be used to explain in part the ways in which practices of schooling contribute to the maintenance of unequal gender (Porter 1986) and ethnic (Rizvi 1986a) relationships in Australian society.

The ideology which is argued by reproduction theorists to be legitimated in schools and which supports the *status quo*, meritocracy and capitalist rationality, does not fully explain why it is that non-dominant groups willingly lend their support to an educational and economic system which leaves them in disadvantaged positions. For if a dominant ideology were simply imposed upon an unwilling populace by coercion, manipulation, indoctrination, or even by the subtle means of economic and cultural reproduction, society would, Williams argues, 'be very much easier to move and change than in practice it has ever been or is' (Williams 1976, p. 205). To explain such limited social and political change, and the acceptance of education which actually reinforces the *status quo*, the notion of 'hegemony' (Gramsci 1971) is important. This difficult concept, which is 'far more powerful and subtle' (Berlak & Berlak 1983, p. 271) than that of ideology, is summarised by Williams:

> [Hegemony] is a whole body of practices and expectations; our assignments of energy, our ordinary understandings of the nature of man and of his world. It is a set of meanings and values which as they are experienced as practices, appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because [it is] experienced reality, beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives.
>
> (Williams 1976, p. 205)

Cultural hegemony, or ideological dominance, then, implies more than simply the imposition on subordinate classes or groups of a ruling class ideology, one that simply asserts the values and beliefs of the ruling class. To maintain its dominance the hegemony must incorporate, at least to some extent, alternative values, interests and perceptions of the world. In this way: 'By ensuring that the dominant culture reflects not only the meanings and practices of the dominant class but also of other groups or classes, hegemony ensures . . . the effective legitimation of the class structure and the consequent relations of domination and subordination' (Shapiro 1984b, p. 28).

In relation to education, the belief that their children may climb the social and economic ladder if they 'do well' at school, or that they will at least be employable if they follow the curriculum and become compe-

tent in particular skills, reinforces in parents an uncritical view of schooling as a neutral activity. Thus, the public accepts, by and large, both the particular forms and structures of 'what counts' as schooling, and also the 'educational' mechanisms by which pupils are stratified according to a hierarchy of status and knowledge. Teachers and administrators are, of course, 'deeply implicated in the processes of identifying and using technocratic procedures for processing students' (Smith 1985, p. 22). But I now want to argue that, even within the technocratic, meritocratic view of education, the criteria by which educational success or failure is measured are unfair to many, indeed most, pupils.

As Smith explains:

> Individuals clearly differ and no one suggests that every student is the 'same'. The acceptance of differences however does not imply inequalities. The latter arise when differences are ranked as 'better', 'higher' or 'superior'. The educational criterion . . . for identifying differences and rectifying them is testing, which itself is a competition for grades. 'Talent' or 'merit' taken as a whole range of human potentialities, has been reduced to a specific set of skills centered on classroom models of learning and a narrow conception of logic . . . Performance is set against quality and competence in a hierarchical scale . . . and becomes a criterion for all manner of entry points into facilities, courses, schools and jobs.
>
> (Smith 1985, pp. 19–20)

This reduction of 'a whole range of human potentialities' to 'a specific set of skills' illustrates the hegemonic nature of curriculum. It represents the dual processes of 'selection' and 'incorporation' on which hegemony rests. What is chosen for emphasis in schools is but a narrow selection 'from the whole possible area of past and present meanings and practices' (Shapiro 1984c, p. 369)—all else is neglected or excluded. And this narrow range of special meanings and practices is incorporated into the dominant culture by being 'reinterpreted, diluted, or put into focus which supports, or at least does not contradict, other elements of the dominant culture' (Shapiro 1984c, 369). This means, however, that when it comes to schooling, 'individuals are measured by attributes that are beyond personal and group control' (Smith 1985, p. 22). But, more importantly, the meritocratic influence encourages and reproduces a competitive, individualist society and does violence to alternative cultures and cultural groups. As Wood (1984) points out, theories of reproduction

> illuminate the ways in which schooling elevates particular cultural forms at the expense of others . . . While the school claims to be merely presenting a previously agreed upon and generally resolved cultural heritage, it is, in fact, doing cultural violence to the diverse traditions children bring to school . . . the notion of cultural capital, those meanings, symbols and objects that legitimate particular forms of social action (or inaction), emerges from this work, helping us understand the role schools play as a cultural moderator. Moderating the struggle between oppressed and dominant cultures, schools lead students to see the dominant culture as the norm and any of their own lived cultures that vary from that norm as deviant. Thus, they reject the very heritage they know and take a second-class position in a culture imposed upon them.
>
> (Wood 1984, p. 225)

As the reproduction critique explains, such cultural violence is subtle,

not aggressive and blatant; it operates through taken-for-granted assumptions about education, culture, and background differences. It does not forcibly or coercively reproduce inequalities but does its work in such a way as to exclude the creation of conditions that might lead to social change.

Cultural discrimination in the classroom

Bourdieu (1977) maintains that cultural discrimination occurs in schools because the hegemonic culture is treated as *the* legitimate culture and all children are treated as if they had equal access to it. This is despite the fact that children from different backgrounds bring different experiences, attitudes and values to school. These form different 'cultural perspectives which extend well beyond the school, to the very core of daily experience' (Cameron et al. 1983, p. 4). The essense of the *hidden curriculum*, the transmission in schools of particular norms and values that equip children to accept their places in the social world beyond school, is that the dignity of most pupils, particularly working-class pupils, is damaged at school as their own culture is devalued in comparison with the hegemonic culture. For many working-class pupils, for instance, it is boredom and the ability to tolerate boredom that are taught as the hidden curriculum. This response to education is based on both the perspectives which working-class children bring to school and also the alienation which many experience within the prevailing, but unfamiliar, culture of the school. The hidden curriculum, therefore, links structures of schooling to structures of society since schools help to maintain existing social relations while limiting challenges to the dominant order from those who are most disadvantaged by it.

That is, by mediating linkages between the individual and society, the hidden curriculum teaches pupils the 'rules' of the social order and to accept the system of status and hierarchy which largely determines their own level of participation in social affairs. Pupils learn to accept their lot, to accept the unequal distribution of power and wealth. In this process what Hall (1977) calls 'cultural preferencing', the complement of what I have called 'cultural discrimination', constantly occurs. Through such preferencing/discriminating the hidden curriculum prepares pupils for the material world, makes them more 'realistic' in their economic expectations, and introduces them to the 'realities' of a world in which power is unequally distributed:

> There is a process of cultural preferencing constantly at work. Cultures are organized in a relationship of *dominance and subordination*. The fact that schools 'prefer' and work best against the background of middle-class cultures has something to do with the fact that, outside the school, these are the dominant cultures—the ones in which the knowledge and know-how (the 'cultural capital' in Bourdieu's phrase) of society is transmitted, the values which are rewarded, which hold society together . . . The processes by which schools, and other institutions, prescribe the powerfulness of the preferred culture, are the same processes which tend to *reproduce* the subordinate cultures in their subordinate positions.
>
> (Hall 1977, p. 45)

According to Cameron et al., 'There are four elements, expressed in general terms, which are commonly reflected in what working class students say about school, and actually do' (1983, p. 5; see also Dwyer et al. 1984). These elements—solidarity, lived knowledge, informality and labour power—are important components of working-class culture, but have little place in contemporary schooling.

Solidarity and mutual support, they argue, contribute to 'a sense of neighbourhood, still a distinctive aspect of working-class areas, with the emphasis on local identity, familiarity and mutual acceptance' (Cameron et al. 1983, p. 5). That is, working-class people have never fully accepted the competitive individualism of a liberal philosophy of society and education. Moreover, Cameron et al. suggest that structures of inequality in Australian society have contributed to the importance in working-class culture of *lived knowledge*.

Lived knowledge, unlike the abstract versions preferred within the dominant culture, is knowledge in which there is no gap between theory and practice. Therefore, Cameron et al. argue:

> The irrelevance of many school subjects to working class students can be linked to an attitude of disregard for ideas which are seen to exist for their own sake, in contrast to the capacity of workers and their children to develop sophisticated problem-solving techniques and theories that can be validated in the context of direct personal experience.
> (Cameron et al. 1983, p. 5; see also Commission of Inquiry into Poverty 1975)

Informality is regarded by Cameron et al. as an important aspect of working-class social identity in public as well as in private life. Hence, with a healthy suspicion of formal structures and bureaucracies, workers and pupils attempt to establish open, informal relationships in the workplace and the school. The resistance of authority figures such as teachers to such informality often leads working-class pupils to use informal means to undermine the established authority and exert their own control over schooling (Angus forthcoming; Willis 1977).

Finally, *labour power*, the market value of their wage labour, strongly influences the perceptions of working-class youth of adulthood. Work, almost any work, Cameron et al. (1983) explain, is seen by such children as more liberating and rewarding than school: 'Work . . . for them is most important for its intrinsic satisfaction, as a source of income, and as a measure of personal independence . . . [Therefore] it is not surprising that many working class youth see little relevance in the activities in schools, given the attractions of getting a job' (Cameron et al. 1983, p. 6). The irony here is that in preferring such a job, often unskilled factory work for early school-leavers (if any job at all), working-class children willingly entrench their position at the bottom end of the social hierarchy (Willis 1977). In this way they contribute by 'choice', as it were, to the reproduction of the unequal relations of society.

These four attributes of working-class culture are rarely considered important by schools or individual teachers. Yet this is not because schools or teachers deliberately set out to disadvantage working-class pupils. Indeed, as I have been at pains to point out, the very opposite has been

the case. A principal theme in the history of educational reforms in Australia and elsewhere has been the attempt to ameliorate social disadvantage. The evidence is clear, moreover, that most teachers enter teaching because they are concerned about children and their general welfare (e.g. Nias 1986). Nevertheless, scholars such as Bernstein (1977) have demonstrated that the patterns of language and communication that are typically employed in classrooms, and the organisation of curriculum and pedagogy, are structured according to 'codes' that are located in ruling-class culture and discourse. Moreover, as Bourdieu & Passeron (1977) also have shown, educational relationships actually reinforce the unequal distribution of the cultural advantages, interpreted by schools as social and intellectual competencies, that are associated with economically dominant groups (Claus 1981). Such cultural discrimination remains largely unrecognised by teachers, pupils and parents as schools are generally taken for granted as neutral, caring institutions.

Claus (1981) points out that many students find that schools have little to offer them:

> a student's belief system and cultural attributes are significant factors in determining educational inequality. If a student has little reason to believe that learning, as defined by schools, is related to the rewards society has to offer, and if a student's cultural predispositions are at odds with the mainstream culture of the school, then that student will find it illogical to engage in formal learning.
>
> (Claus 1981, p. 157)

Many working-class students, then, have what seem to them to be good reasons for leaving school at an early age despite the wishes of their parents, who retain faith in the ability of a 'good' education to improve their children's relative social and economic position. This point is graphically made by Connell et al. (1982), whose work illustrates the compatibility of home and school for children of ruling-class families compared with the dissonance experienced by children from working-class backgrounds. Those students who most clearly perceive this dissonance are the ones who are most likely to withdraw from school:

> A child must believe there is some purpose for himself in learning what is presented him in school or he will not learn it . . . so long as the society appears stratified on a largely ascriptive basis . . . the students who think they are bound to lose will not embrace its representatives in the public schools.
>
> (M. Metz, *Classrooms ands Corridors*, pp. 243, 254, quoted in Claus 1981, p. 157)

In this way students from various social groups adjust to the 'ceiling on opportunity' which is 'adapted to and reinforced' (Claus 1981, p. 159).

Teachers and schools

The complicity, at least passively, of teachers in the cultural violence that is done to many children in schools needs to be explained. This is particularly the case since most teachers regard themselves as members of a 'helping' profession. And, as I have argued, a traditional theme in public education in Australia is that education should particularly help the most disadvantaged. Cameron et al. address this paradox in relation to working-class pupils:

> There are a wide range of ideological and structural constraints which make it very difficult for teachers to value and take seriously the interests, experiences and cultural perspectives of working class people. Not least important in this regard is the process of ideological filtering which all teachers have endured in their own schooling, which presents a particular perspective on working class people.
>
> (Cameron et al. 1983, p. 6)

Of these 'ideological and structural constraints' on teachers and administrators in schools perhaps the most important is the teachers' own conceptions of what their 'role' should be.

Teacher role

By 'role' I do not mean to use the term as it has been understood in traditional administrative and organisational theory, in which organisations are seen not as consisting of persons of creativity and originality but as conglomerations of carefully prescribed and delineated role positions (e.g. Barnard 1938; Simon 1945). As Denhardt summarises this widely-held but generally unhelpful perspective:

> the member is only a part of the organization to the extent that he fulfills certain tasks which contribute to the rationality of the system as a whole. The individual is not permitted to design his own activity space, but is instead presented with a highly structured role—one integrated into a larger scheme of rationality
>
> (Denhardt 1977, pp. 267–8)

The persistence and insidiousness of this pervasive, disabling and demeaning conception of the 'role' of teachers and administrators is thoroughly examined and critiqued by Rizvi (1986b). The point I want to make here is that the widely accepted notion of the appropriate 'teacher role', although legitimated in the educational administration and teacher education literature as part of organisational rationality, is an historically and culturally produced concept. It is a concept, moreover, that fits neatly into the structural-functionalist view of society and education that I have critiqued elsewhere (Angus 1986a).

The notion of role that I wish to deal with here is that of 'what it means to be a teacher'. A set of understandings and expectations about teachers has become largely institutionalised and 'taken for granted' since the emergence of mass education in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The notion of 'teacher role' relies heavily on the false view that education is politically neutral and that teachers are first and foremost public servants who, in doing their jobs efficiently and effectively, contribute

to the 'common good'. Within this conception, individual teachers play their part in the education system—each playing the teacher role for a group of students until they hand them on to the next teacher at the end of the lesson or the year.

Teachers typically enter classrooms with fairly clear ideas of what education is about and how the wider society, pupils, other teachers, principals and training institutions expect them to teach. Amongst this set of understandings the work of the teacher is seen as being essentially technical and concerned especially with the task of overcoming indiscipline and ignorance in pupils (Dale 1977). The broad aims of education, the body of knowledge to be taught, the means by which such knowledge is taught, are all generally decided elsewhere in the system and the task of the teacher is to 'teach'—to use appropriate means to reach the prescribed ends. As Giroux explains:

> The rationality that dominates traditional views of schooling and curriculum is rooted in the the narrow concerns for effectiveness, behavioral objectives, and principles of learning that treat knowledge as something to be consumed and schools merely as instructional sites designed to pass onto students a 'common' culture and set of skills that will enable them to operate effectively in the wider society. Steeped in the logic of technical rationality, the problematic of traditional curriculum theory and schooling centers on questions about the most thorough or most efficient way to learn specific kinds of knowledge, to create moral consensus, and to provide modes of schooling that reproduce the existing society. For instance, traditional educators may ask *how* the school should seek to attain a certain predefined goal, but they rarely ask *why* such a goal might be beneficial to some socioeconomic groups and not to others, or *why* schools, as they are presently organized, tend to block the possibility that specific classes will attain a measure of economic and political autonomy.
>
> (Giroux 1984, p. 36)

What is generally regarded as teaching and learning in schools comes down to a narrow range of activities which, guided by positivistic thinking that separates means from ends and facts from values, merely pass on to students 'agreed truths' and 'bodies of knowledge' which authorities and experts over the years have deemed to be that which pupils should 'know'. Knowledge in this context is regarded as unproblematic, it 'is reified, and human agency is removed from considerations of how one "knows"' (Wood 1984, p. 225). Administrators, teachers and pupils are all expected to conform to certain established traditions and rituals in schools which, even in the pretend-school games of very young children, contain models of teacher and pupil roles, authority relations and teaching practice. In their concern to be 'good' teachers and administrators, and in the face of a range of problems in day-to-day schooling (including problems of discipline and control, marking, the allocation of time and space, diverse abilities and attitudes of class members, pressure from administrators and parents) teachers and administrators 'do their jobs' in ways which largely ignore the social and cultural aspects of education in favour of 'practical' concerns. Through an accumulation of craft knowledge, stories, and on-the-job socialisation, teachers and administrators add to the rituals and expectations of what they should do in schools and develop 'ready-made technical solutions for school problems that are part of the repertoire of

being a teacher, or a principal' (Smith 1985, p. 33). All of this has resulted, Giroux (1984) suggests, in a situation in which the very language that teachers and administrators use is rooted in a limited world-view such that their discourse about school and educational issues 'prevents educators from critically examining the ideological assumptions embedded in their own language and the schooling experiences that they help to structure' (Giroux 1984, p. 34).

This historical and cultural notion of role, therefore, constrains teachers and administrators in their conceptions of what is possible in schools and in society. It also constrains parents and students because it operates unconsciously, as socially accepted presuppositions and taken for granted assumptions about what is natural and appropriate in schooling.

Bureaucratic rationality and individual responsibility

There is also a sense in which the limited concept of role that is associated with systems theory and bureaucracy (Simon 1945) must be considered in attempting to understand the wide acceptance by teachers of the supposed 'neutrality' of schooling. This relates to the pervasiveness of bureaucratic and technical rationality in schools. As Rizvi (1986b) explains, such 'rationality' holds that organisation members should be led and guided by experts whose task it is to apply technical or instrumental solutions to practical problems. Individual responsibility is often minimal at lower levels of the bureaucracy as teachers are expected to adopt the established logic of the broader education system without unduly questioning it. Rather than subjecting to scrutiny much of what is taken for granted in education, then, teachers, like their nineteenth-century predecessors, are not expected to take any initiative in critically appraising their teaching practice and the experience of schooling. This means that even mildly reformist teachers are often diverted into considerations of merely efficient operation of schools rather than genuine educational concerns. This has two important consequences.

Firstly, as Denhardt (1977) explains, bureaucratic or organisational rationality absolves the individual's sense of personal responsibility for her or his actions:

> As members of organization, persons can not only perform questionable acts; they can justify them in terms of the greater purpose and superior rationality of bureaucracy . . . Through organization, we can distort societal standards, acting in a limited frame of interest, yet remain blameless. Simply by invoking the logic of bureaucracy, we are able to make that which is personal impersonal and that which is moral amoral. The organization, intendedly an instrument of achievement, becomes a moral force for absolving personal responsibility
>
> (Denhardt 1977, p. 265)

In this way, even problematic aspects of schooling that teachers may feel uncomfortable about (like the educational disadvantages that are confronted by children from minority or non-dominant groups) can be seen as 'system' problems rather than as ones which teachers have both an individual and collective responsibility to confront.

Secondly, the sense of hierarchy and instrumental efficiency that charac-

terises bureaucratic rationality leads to an emphasis upon technical concerns, efficiency and prediction. This shows up in schools, as Bullough et al. (1984) point out, 'as a preeminence of time concerns in curriculum matters and in the widely held belief that all learning is a simple, mechanically additive process having little to do with intuition or insight' (p. 343). Bullough et al. (1984) also explain that bureaucratic rationality, or what they call 'technocratic ideology', is also apparent in the curriculum form that is typically employed in schools:

> The specific curriculum form ... delineates the educational issues that teachers can be concerned with, issues centering on processes, on educational means, but rarely on ends or goals per se. Teachers can thus pay attention to tactics like individualizing subject matter, providing for differential rates of learning, informing fellow teachers and the community about student progress, and so on ... The teacher's freedom of determination, even respecting only process issues, is quite narrow.
>
> (Bullough et al. 1984, p. 346)

This narrowness is nowhere more clearly illustrated than in the current proliferation of 'teacher-proof' curriculum packages which erode the already limited autonomy of classroom teachers by removing their need to make professional judgments. Such deskilling turns teachers into technicians who are even more remote from the particular concerns and interests of their pupils (Apple 1982).

Mindful of the role that is expected of them, and into which they have become socialised, teachers largely conform to an image of public servant and obedient technician that is contained in the prevailing bureaucratic rationality, and in the ideology which it sustains by presenting education as a neutral enterprise. As Giroux powerfully summarises the nature of the prevalent ideology in education:

> The ideology that guides the present rationality of the school is relatively conservative: it is primarily concerned with how-to questions and does not question relationships between knowledge and power or between culture and politics ... The issue of how teachers, students, and representatives from the wider society generate meaning tends to be obscured in favor of the issue of how people can master someone else's meaning, thus depoliticizing both the notion of school culture and the notion of classroom pedagogy ... It ignores the dreams, histories, and visions that people bring to schools.
>
> (Giroux 1984, p. 37)

Within this ideology, the concern for the welfare and humanity of children and society that prompts many young people to become teachers in the first place can too easily become lost amongst concerns for effective teaching, subject specialisation, administrative efficiency, and the like. The 'naive idealist' may too readily be transformed into the 'pragmatic classroom manager' or 'obedient technician'. Such teachers become blind to the social and cultural functions of education, to the stratification and legitimation of social groups, as they strive to 'do their jobs'.

Teachers often fail to consider, for instance, how what becomes defined as high-status knowledge in schools legitimates and supports certain cultural and social practices as well as certain forms of knowledge (Apple 1982).

Schooling and cultural capital

The legitimation in schools of culturally specific forms of knowledge and social practices illustrates the point that, as Giroux states: 'Schools are not merely instructional sites but also sites where the culture of the dominant society is learned and where students experience the difference between those status and class distinctions that exist in the larger society' (Giroux 1984, p. 36). This argument, one with which many radical scholars concur, suggests that the children who enter schools are already differentiated according to what Bourdieu & Passeron (1977) call their 'cultural capital'. These existing divisions, which have to do with a range of cultural aptitudes, behaviours and dispositions, and which range from manners of speaking and dressing to ways of socialising and cultivating social networks, are further entrenched in schools. This is most apparent in schools where pupils are streamed, but cultural division also works in other subtle and not-so-subtle ways. At the level of day-to-day interaction with pupils, for instance: 'many teachers are repeatedly affronted by the appearance and behaviour of working class kids, whose energy and directness is often irritating when compared to the habits, values and perspectives which they have come to take for granted, even if only through their own success in schooling' (Cameron et al. 1983, p. 6).

In such ways the educational performance of children is affected by their social and cultural backgrounds. I want to emphasise that I am not referring here to any cultural deprivation, lack of parental support, disinterest, absence of regard for the importance of schooling, or any of the other demeaning socio-psychological explanations that are commonly advanced to explain the relative lack of success of working-class children in schools. The problem is not one of cultural inadequacy of the working class, but one of differential treatment of cultural attributes in schools and society. Schools help to create educational success or failure, then, in ways other than objective teaching and testing. Because of cultural discrimination and alienation, working-class people are often victims of a social system that has worked to injure, insult and disempower them (Connell et al. 1982). The traditional and widely accepted explanations of differences in educational outcomes, however, focus not on social and cultural forces that are played out in schools but on the particular characteristics of individual pupils: 'They refer to the attributes of individuals as the source of performance, and in the main they divert attention from school practices, so maintaining those practices and whatever social forms they reflect' (Carrier 1984, p. 41). That is, teachers, through both the institutionalised expectations of teacher role and their training, are expected to regard educational problems as being manifestations of individual problems. The task of the teacher, therefore, is seen as being to remedy such individual problems by means of individual treatment. Within this logic both teachers and pupils are seen in isolation from each other and from their social contexts. But this view of education as the cultivation of individual students, or individual disembodied talents, denies that the education system has social functions and social consequences that are historically constituted.

Individual explanations of educational outcomes are both a result of,

and also encourage and sustain, the view that all children have an equal opportunity to succeed and that the key to success or failure is individual ability and individual effort. In this model, teachers and schools have little to do with educational success or failure, so educational practices can continue to be regarded as neutral.

This perspective, which derives largely from naturalist educational psychology, is exposed as inadequate by the important research of scholars such as Connell et al. (1982) and Willis (1977) who focus attention back on to the experience of schooling and the relationship between school and society as sources of explanations of educational outcomes. Such research supports the view of Fitzclarence & Giroux (1984) that: 'What is important to remember here is that the dominant school culture functions not only to legitimate the interests and values of dominant groups, it also functions to marginalize and disconfirm knowledge forms and experiences that are extremely important to subordinate and oppressed groups' (p. 22).

One way in which such disconfirmation of valued working-class cultural perspectives occurs in schools is outlined by Cameron et al. who explain that working-class pupils are made to feel uncomfortable at school because of

> the deep-seated perpetuation of the myth of a distinction between mental and manual abilities, which is at odds with the element of 'lived knowledge' [in working-class culture]. It is this distinction which, although false, has become pivotal in our society, and in all western industrialised societies, as a basis for legitimating a social hierarchy. 'Not coping with the work' becomes a distinct status which reflects stupidity.
>
> (Cameron et al. 1983, p. 6)

The division between mental and manual abilities shows up in adult society as a division between the conception and execution of work tasks, a major component of technocratic rationality in an industrialised society. So-called 'academic' or 'theoretical' forms of knowledge are seen in schools as more significant, more important, and more difficult than practical knowledge. The selection of 'what counts' as high-status knowledge to be emphasised in school curricula is an illustration of the way in which dominant forms of culture are legitimated in schools (Apple 1982), in this case through hierarchically arranged forms of knowledge. Thus, working-class students, unable to compete equally on the foreign ground of the dominant culture, may begin to doubt the worth of their own cultural heritage and resign themselves to the lowly positions to which the school assigns them.

There is no doubt that the alienated, frustrated, or simply puzzled response of some students to particular features of the school and school organisation can cause problems for teachers. Individual pupils and classes within schools (especially in the lower streams of streamed schools) gain reputations for being difficult. Schools, too, 'have histories and traditions; schools and catchment populations have reputations . . . ; teachers adapt to the perceived characteristics of local or catchment populations and teach accordingly' (Smith 1985, p. 33; see also Anyon 1980).

Moreover, as Young points out:

> Australian secondary schools, like most secondary schools throughout the world, are characterized by the external constraints of the examination, the syllabus, and the instrumental goals of status-maintenance and status-achievement. Such systems present teachers with three demands. They must cover the work, ensure that students master it and manage to control classroom conduct and conditions so as to achieve these goals.
>
> (Young 1981, p. 201)

In complying with these constraints, teachers by and large remain true to a view of pedagogy and curriculum which, while generally narrow, is especially narrow in 'working-class' schools in which classroom control is seen as being particularly imperative for teachers (Anyon 1980; Connell 1985). Such teaching practice reflects a division of labour that replicates procedures of regimentation and hierarchical control of workers rather than insisting upon a collaborative educational relationship that would involve consent and co-operation. Indeed, according to Shapiro (1983), 'Education has replaced any concern with the general apprehension of the meanings and values in society, or the development of the faculties of critical inquiry, with a preoccupation with the acquisition of those instrumentalities necessary only to attain and maintain one's place in the labor market' (p. 23). The important point here, and the essential point that I have attempted to make throughout this monograph, is that generally entrenched instrumental approaches to education uncritically sustain and legitimate an unsatisfactory, hierarchical social order.

Contradictions and crisis in schooling

Within entrenched education rationality, the positive and progressive hopes that lay behind prominent themes in Australian education are squandered. Education for democracy, social harmony, equality and social mobility offered a liberatory and egalitarian promise which has not been realised. The version of democracy that is encouraged in schools, both in school practices and in curriculum, has traditionally allowed little scope for the participation of pupils and citizens (Angus 1986a; Wood 1984, 1985; Rizvi 1986b). The part played by schools in the preservation of social harmony has resulted not in any greater spirit of community but, by and large, in more subtle social control and social exclusion. This has been facilitated, especially, by the common understanding of equality as 'equality of opportunity' which offers social mobility only within the established hierarchy to those few who prove their 'worth' in meritocratic competition. It is this individual competitiveness and the assumption that the grounds of the competition are 'fair', more than anything else, I have argued, that legitimates cultural discrimination and the dominant hierarchy.

Dawkins (1986) points out, however, that the linkages that were once generally taken for granted between the education system and the larger social, economic, political and cultural systems have not appeared to be as effective in recent years as they formerly were. Dawkins traces, for instance, the emergence of transition from school to work programs as one attempt by government in Australia to deal in part with a 'legitimation crisis' (Habermas 1976) which affects government and the economy

as well as the connections between education and society. Current debate about so-called declining efficiency of schools and the plethora of politically conservative educational reports both in Australia and elsewhere (Angus 1986a) can be seen as further symptoms of the general legitimation crisis in education. But although this crisis in education is manifest most clearly in attempts to restore linkages between schooling and work, Shapiro (1984b) argues that:

> the crisis of legitimation in education is basically rooted in three distinct areas of ideological and institutional conflict. The first has to do with the results, in educational dysfunctionality, of maintaining a hegemonic form of cultural domination. The second area of conflict arises from the consequences of a social system which, in Althusser's terms, is a 'complex unity of uneven instances', that is, a social formation in which the apparatuses of socialisation cannot be regarded as necessarily congruent or harmonious in the cultural or ideological meanings they transmit. The final problematic area has to do with the consequences, in educational purposes and goals, of the conflicting aims of liberal and economic ideology—the conjunction of which represents the defining feature of the bourgeois democratic state.
>
> (Shapiro 1984b, p. 27)

This type of analysis raises implications for the part played by schools in the reproduction of the structures of capitalist society. For it makes clear the contradictory position of schools which must simultaneously support both the economic and political elements of our bourgeois democratic society:

> While [schools] must transmit an ideology based in the values of the market place, they must also, in certain respects, attempt to represent a field of democratic and classless values that are the antithesis of this ideology. From such a perspective, it is possible to see how the comprehensive high school . . . makes clear the unique role of the school in having to conform to both the economic and the political values of capitalist society. Within this institution are juxtaposed egalitarian political and legal forms with hierarchical and unequal economic practices. This configuration is reflected in the commitment of the comprehensive high school to provide equality of access to the progeny of all citizens, while at the same time dispensing differentiated forms of knowledge and educational experience (and, hence, socioeconomic inequality) to those same individuals.
>
> (Shapiro 1984b, p. 34)

As Dawkins's (1986) analysis illustrates, however, it is increasingly difficult for schools to reconcile notions of democracy and equality with the unequal outcomes of education. This is because 'at both the macrocosmic level of the political system and at the institutional level of public education, expectations raised by democratic ideology are increasingly confronted, and frustrated, by imperatives that have their source in the market economy of a class-divided society' (Shapiro 1984b, p. 34). Any crisis in education must be seen, therefore, as being related to the structures of domination that are entrenched in our society and which are generally reinforced in schools. This issue can be addressed only by reforming schools to enhance the liberating promise of democracy and equality in schools so that the 'consciousness of disempowerment' (Shapiro 1984a, p. 13) that is typically fostered in schools and society can be challenged.

Conclusion: Democracy and equality in schools

An emphasis upon principles of genuine democracy and equality in Australian education would mean that schools and classrooms would become places in which 'essential concerns of what it means to be a person and a citizen—a member of a cultural community' (Bates 1983, p. 46), would be central. An attempt would be made to facilitate genuine participation in school and social affairs such that the relationships between school and society, and taken-for-granted notions of curriculum and pedagogy, might be made problematic and subjected to scrutiny (Angus 1986a). Schools and classrooms would become places of collective social action in which administrators, teachers and pupils would work to develop social and political understandings which would promote co-operation, genuine social learning, and individual and social responsibility (Angus 1986a). Such an approach would aim to engender commitment to principles of equality and democracy.

None of this is to deny that there are massive external constraints upon what even the most democratic of schools—ones which in their organisation and curriculum embody principles of participation, equality and emancipation—can do in reforming a society in which hierarchy and inequality appear to be institutionalised. Nevertheless, schools as an integral part of society have a dialectical influence upon social structures which is captured in the question: Do schools change (or at least, shape) pupils to fit the existing society; or do schools educate pupils to change (or at least, shape) society to fit them? I think that the answer to this question, despite the power of reproduction arguments, is that schools do both. But the overall tendency, despite continuous resistance and contestation (Giroux 1983), has been the preservation of current arrangements because of restraints that are largely social and cultural. The argument is that teachers and others (parents, pupils, education officials, citizens) may be able to work within the education system to expose the constraints on schooling and ultimately to remove them. Therefore, while schools alone cannot bring about fundamental social change, they can contribute to and facilitate social change by developing a critical orientation towards society and social institutions amongst pupils and other school participants and in school practices.

I wish to be clear in my meaning on this point. I am suggesting that *all* children—ruling-class, working-class and anywhere in between—would benefit from a critical approach to schooling which was built upon ideals of democracy and equality. While recent valuable Australian literature suggests that working-class schools should be 'organic' to the working class, just as ruling-class schools are organic to *their* class (Connell et al. 1982), I would argue that *all* schools should be committed to principles of equality and justice. Just as working-class pupils should come to learn in schools about the nature of social, political and economic structures that bear down upon them and their families and communities, ruling class pupils should confront the reasons for their own advantaged position in the social hierarchy. All pupils should learn about working-class culture and conditions and about the privileges that are associated with ruling-class birth and culture. Ruling-class children, for instance, need to know

why and how it is that things are relatively easy and comfortable for them. They need to know that they do not necessarily succeed through their own innate superiority but also through a combination of social and cultural conditions. Both working-class and ruling-class cultures should be critically examined with a view to reforming them. Considerations of individual interest would then be weighed against general humanitarian standards and communitarian ideals.

This approach would necessitate that the values and knowledge of pupils and teachers become a legitimate curriculum resource, thus opening up possibilities of sharing ourselves and our cultures through education. School and classroom organisation would become less hierarchical as it would be formed through collective social action which would address the form and purposes of schooling and the interests that are served by present educational arrangements. The purpose of such a critical orientation towards school and social practices

> is to free people from causal mechanisms that had heretofore determined their existence in some important way, by revealing both the existence and precise nature of these mechanisms and thereby depriving them of their power . . . [Such an approach] seeks to aid people who are objects in the world in transforming themselves into active subjects who are self-determining.
>
> (Fay 1977, p. 210)

Such an approach aims to enable and empower students, in particular, so that they may be able 'to resist manipulation, mystification, and coercion' (Greene 1984, p. 293). The aim of encouraging active rather than passive citizenship is to motivate school participants to be concerned with democracy, and with the self and social awareness that is a prerequisite for liberation, rather than with the regulation, control and mystification that the predominantly hierarchical organisation of schools has long entrenched. Through a critical perspective, educators might begin to agree with the oft-quoted conclusion of Connell et al. that:

> Education has fundamental connections with the idea of human emancipation, though it is constantly in danger of being captured for other interests. In a society disfigured by class exploitation, sexual and racial oppression, and in chronic danger of war and environmental destruction, the only education worth the name is one that forms people capable of taking part in their own liberation. The business of the school is not propaganda; it is equipping people with the knowledge and skills and concepts relevant to remaking a dangerous and disordered world. In the most basic sense, the process of education and the process of liberation are the same. They are aspects of the painful growth of the human species' collective wisdom and self-control. At the beginning of the 1980s it is plain that the forces opposed to that growth, here and on the world scale, are not only powerful but have become increasingly militant. In such circumstances education becomes a risky enterprise. Teachers too have to decide whose side they are on.
>
> (Connell et al. 1982, p. 208)

The argument of this monograph is that teachers, pupils, administrators and school communities should be on the side of democracy and critical scrutiny rather than on that of hierarchy and institutionalised practice; participation and negotiation rather than social control and manipulation; social learning and critical cultural awareness rather than mystifi-

cation and the authoritarian and dogmatic presentation and assessment of predetermined (and often prepackaged) 'knowledge'. That is, education should explicitly assist in the necessarily ongoing process of social reconstruction 'by helping students (and others) to become creative, critical thinkers and active social participants, and to become capable of redefining the nature of their own lives in the society in which they live' (Gordon 1985, p. 2). Such social reconstruction would necessarily be gradual for it would build upon the positive elements in existing practice, flawed though they might be, so that all citizens may eventually be better served by schools.

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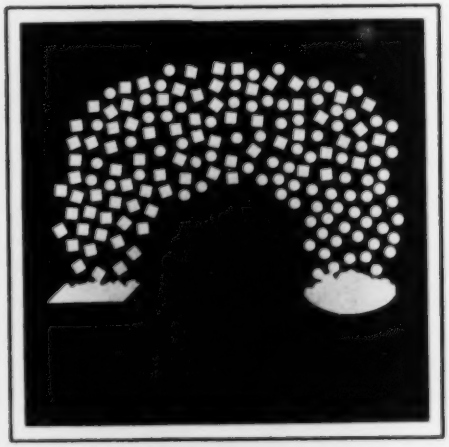
Readings



1

The school – the institution and its controlling bureaucracy

B. Bessant

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The study of history of education helps us to place modern forms of schooling and education into perspective. It helps us to realise that schools as we know them are historically quite recent institutions; that they are not necessarily the only nor the ideal way of imparting knowledge and society's mores, and that since their establishment in Australia in the nineteenth century they have seen few, if any, fundamental changes in their philosophy or institutional structure.

The institution of the school need not have evolved in its present form. The school is not an essential for literacy. By the mid-nineteenth century the great majority of Swedes were able to read without resort to formal schooling. The parents had the responsibility for teaching their children under the general guidance of the clergy.[1] The elements of alternative forms of schooling were also present in Britain in the nineteenth century.

> National education was not ... simply a matter of providing an elementary education to a class that was otherwise intellectually and morally destitute; it was, rather, a matter of providing a particular <u>form</u> of education to a class which had (however unsystematically) alternative <u>forms</u> of learning available.[2]

The particular form chosen in Britain and Australia was the 'school' in which children were taken away from their family, isolated from the community in a 'prison like' structure, and subjected to an authoritarian discipline by teachers who were themselves subject to a similar control. This compulsory herding of children into schools for several hours each day constituted a major change in the life of working class families. It was a

change which was resisted, albiet mostly passively, for it deprived the family of help and assistance which had previously been important for its survival.

This paper argues that a study of the history of education shows us that -

(a) The institutional/authority structures embodied in the school systems established in the Australian colonies in the 1870s and 1880s have changed little over the last 100 years. There have been quantitative and technical changes, but the basic nineteenth century organisation and philosophy of schooling remains unchanged.

(b) The experience of the child in the school is much the same in the 1980s as it was in the 1880s. Schooling remains a pleasant place for the 'achievers', but for the rest it is to be endured.

The paper is concerned with elementary schooling in Victoria but it is argued that the general propositions hold for all states as well as for secondary schooling.

* * *

The 1872 Victorian Education Act, while heralding the change-over in control over elementary schooling in Victoria from church to state, was essentially concerned with getting the children of the working class into schools, and as a necessary part of this process establishing an efficient control structure over the schooling of these children. There was a fair measure of agreement on this amongst the mercantile bourgeoisie which, by the 1870s, had come to dominate the political life of Victoria. It was generally agreed that the dual system of denominational and common schools could not cope with any expansion of the school system. Schooling in one culture would mitigate class and religious differences; it would promote a well-ordered society, a society of respectable 'citizens'.

The schooling of working class children in middle class values was seen to be essential for the well-being, progress and general harmony of the colony. It was known there would be resistance from many parents of working class children to compulsory schooling. To cope with this, compulsory schooling administered by a central state authority was necessary. A widespread network of schools was to be established throughout the colony.

It followed from the logic applied by the education reformers of 1872 that rigid controls had to be imposed on what actually occurred in the schools, otherwise the main object of universal elementary schooling i.e. producing 'good' citizens, would be in jeopardy. It was no good allowing teachers a free rein with the curriculum because teachers, like parents, could not be trusted to inculcate the 'correct' values, nor even to provide a 'suitable' school environment for the instruction of their pupils. At the same time a tangible return from the investment in schooling was demanded so that teachers were expected to come up with the results. This approach to schooling required an efficient control structure which would provide checks on both teachers and inspectors. Because of the sparsely settled occupation of Victoria it was seen to be more equitable, cheaper and more efficient to centralise this control in Melbourne.

The rudiments of this centralised structure had already been established before 1872. The inspectorial system had been systematised, and in 1864 payment by results had been introduced whereby part of the teacher's salary depended upon the results obtained by the students at the examinations. But the one thing lacking in this system was direct control by parliament and cabinet. It was this situation which the 1872 Act sought to remedy. The Act created the Education Department of Victoria which was to consist of (in order of precedence) the Minister of Public Instruction, the Secretary, and Inspector-General, the inspectors and the teachers and students.[3] A direct line of control was established from cabinet through Minister down to the schools. The Minister who introduced the Bill saw this establishment of a Department responsible to a Minister as 'a fundamental principle of this Bill'.[4] What went on in the schools was to be the concern of parliament, with a Minister directly responsible to parliament for the operation of the schools.

The aim of the Bill was to introduce 'a general uniform system of State schools over the whole country'.[5] The new Education Department was to be given the power to decide where these schools should or should not be situated, who would teach in them and what was to be taught. In the twenty years that followed a body of regulations and procedures was built up which aimed at systematically regulating every aspect of the schooling process in Victoria.[6]

The Public Service Act of 1883 brought teachers firmly within the ambit of the Victorian Public Service.[7] Henceforth, (actually

from 1885) teachers were to work within a classification and promotion system similar to that prevailing in the public service. For teachers it set out in detail a system of classification and promotion which was thereafter to apply in the state teaching service.[8] Control over teachers was to be maintained by a series of promotion barriers and rewards and supervised by a Board of Classifiers established under the Act.

As a result of the Act every state school was placed in one of five classifications according to numbers of students and a staffing schedule was listed for each of these classifications.[9] Every teacher was then classified (placed in one of the classes) and placed on a classified roll. Teachers faced two barriers each time they sought promotion up this hierarchial system - a qualification barrier and a good conduct barrier - the latter determined by the regular visits of the District Inspectors.

Advancement up the hierarchy which was created was now based on how well the individual teacher conformed in his/her day to day teaching to the whims and wishes of the Departmental inspector, and how well he/she could reproduce on the examination papers the 'correct' answers in the Department's teachers' examinations, also set and marked by the inspectors. Needless to say both teachers and inspectors had taken note when several recalcitrant inspectors lost their jobs in the 1870s.[10] From the mid-eighties the new system would weed out the 'troublemakers' long before they reached the upper ranks and no further dismissals of inspectors took place.

The work of the teacher was clearly laid down in the regulations of 1885. The 'Course of Free Instruction' was set out in detail and the teacher was required to hang 'in a conspicuous place in the school-room' the time-table which should

> ... set forth the hours of opening and closing school, the employment of the several classes at anytime, the teachers in charge thereof respectively, the time set apart for instruction in extra subjects, and the arrangements made for the supervision of children in the playground.[11]

The individual teacher also displayed his/her work program so that when the inspector arrived (often without warning) he would be able to quickly ascertain the lesson in progress. Of course, if the work program was not being followed he would want to know why. Other regulations systematised the whole schooling process - discipline, keeping of records on both pupils and teachers, holidays, school books, extra subjects etc.[12]

Over the following decades the bureaucracy created to regulate the schooling process grew in complexity as the demand developed for administrative and professional functionaries to police and service the system. The teachers became entirely emmershed in the hierarchy and preoccupied with their career lines. No longer were they reliant on political patronage. So long as they did not 'rock the boat' their jobs were secure.

In the 100 years since the 1870s-1880s there has been no fundamental change in the institutional/authority structure which was established in that period. It has been refined and systematised but the hierarchy of control from cabinet through minister down through director general, assistant director generals, inspectors to the schools, remains the same. In fact many of the regulations devised in the 1870s and 1880s remain in force today in some form or other.

While the schooling of working class children in middle class values is no longer given overtly as a fundamental aim of our elementary school system, the socialisation process still goes on, only that we have developed more subtle and more efficient means of carrying it out. In the 1880s Victorian teachers were obsessed with examination results partly because half of their salaries depended on these, but also because good results helped their progress up the hierarchy. Since then the psychologists have developed much more 'efficient' methods of weeding out the 'sheep from the goats', but this basic function of the school remains i.e. distinguishing the achievers from the non-achievers, or separating those who are more likely to be successful in our competitive capitalist society from the rest.

The elementary school as an institution has changed little since the 1880s. While there have been obvious reductions in class sizes, better buildings constructed (in some areas), teaching methods improved (hopefully), and courses of study systematised and refined, the fundamental relationships within the school remain the same. The head teacher is the unquestioned authority in her or his school. Likewise the teacher in the classroom. Discipline of teachers is maintained by the inspectorial system, just as discipline of pupils is ensured by a variety of punishments, but with less emphasis on corporal punishment compared with the 1880s. Schooling - the imparting of knowledge, the development of social relationships, the definition of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, still goes in the classroom and in the school ground in much the same way as 100 years ago. The class lesson may be now enlivened with a variety of teaching aids, and class may escape into the outside world during the occasional school excur-

sion; the school ground may have playground equipment, but what goes on within the established school structure between head teacher/pupil, teacher/pupil, pupil/pupil and head teacher/teacher shows little change.

The fact that the institution of the school as we know it was imposed on society against the wishes of a substantial section of the population has been lost sight of over the last 100 years. One of the most successful public relations campaigns in history has been carried out in convincing the vast majority of people that schooling as we know it is a good thing.

In 1872 the Victorian Education Act made schooling compulsory from 6-15 years. In 1899, after twenty-six years in operation, the compulsory provision had only resulted in an increase in average attendance from 50.33 per cent in 1872 to 60.15 per cent in 1899 (the compulsory period had been reduced to 13 in 1889). Of course there had been a great increase in the number of children attending school in this period (from 68,456 to 143,844), but the average attendance had only increased by 10 per cent when compared with the total number of children enrolled.[13]

In the 1920s a massive effort was instituted to enforce the compulsory provisions. Between 1921 and 1928 around 11,000 prosecutions were launched each year against parents who failed to send their children to school.[14] By the end of the decade the average attendance on gross enrolment was still only 70.8 per cent - a 10 per cent increase on the 1899 figures.[15] While this was a significant increase in attendance considering the more stringent conditions applying in 1930 compared with 1899, there still remained a solid core of irregular and non-attenders. A significant group of parents were either evading the compulsory provisions or were simply observing the minimum requirements.

It took the state 60 years to achieve a 70 per cent attendance figure. The resistance to compulsory schooling was far greater than was every publicly admitted, and it was only after a relentless, punitive campaign against the recalicrant parents in the 1920s and 1930s that universal elementary schooling came close to reality in Victoria.

Education research workers being drawn from the more successful members of our society, tend to forget that even today for many children school is not a happy place. Apathy, hostility, indifference, distaste, is found in every elementary school, particularly amongst the 'non-achievers'. In the 1880s children could avoid this unpleasant experience by simply not going to school or going

as infrequently as possible. In 1980s this is not possible, but it could be argued that the residue of the imposition of schooling is still with us. It just might be the case that the institutions we know as schools may not be the most suitable means of educating a significant proportion of our school population.

A study of the history of education helps us to see the limits of our present research preoccupations.

Hopefully it provokes more fundamental questions, and enables us to see beyond the confines of our time. It tells us about change - past, present and future. It tells us that change is not always equated with progress.

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4. Victorian Parliamentary Debates, vol.15, 12 September 1872, p.1351.
5. Ibid., p.1352.
6. For an early consolidation of these regulations promulgated under the 1872 Act, see Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 1885, vol.3, Education Act 1972 - Regulations.
7. Public Service Act 1883, no.773.
8. Ibid., sections 43-70.
9. Ibid., Sixth Schedule
10. Inspector Geary lost his position in 1874, inspectors Brown and Venables in 1878. See Government Gazette, 24 January 1878, p.162.
11. Victorian Parliamentary Papers, vol.3, 1885, Education Act 1872, Regulations, p.10.
12. See Ibid., pp.10-12.
13. Victorian Parliamentary Papers, vol.2, 1900, Report of the Minister of Public Instruction 1899-1900, p.5.
14. Victorian Parliamentary Papers, vol.2, Reports of the Minister of Public Instruction, 1922-28. The peak years were 1924-6.
15. Ibid., 1930-31, p.10.

2

Letter to an alternative teacher

Bill Hannan

Source: Bill Hannan, 'Letter to an alternative teacher', *Democratic Curriculum: Essays on Schooling and Society*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, and Victorian Secondary Teachers Association, North Richmond, Vic., 1985, pp. 247–59.

Schools have only one problem, they lose kids

Let's go back to the beginning, and attempt an overview. Your alternative school develops a life of its own. It can become even more closed off from the world then the institutionalised schools it was once declared alternative to. You need to keep remembering what in fact you are alternative to.

It would be good to have a simple, rough definition of the status quo, to remind everyone of what it is we're working against, and hence what we're aiming towards. 'Traditional' — the most common word — won't do. It begs the question. What we want is a word that covers the anti-democratic, classist nature of traditional Australian schools, a word that covers also their insularity, their pedantry, their materialism and their individualism. 'Elitist' isn't bad, but it makes you think of a cultivated ruling class which plainly doesn't exist in the land of Boltes and Bjelkes. 'Bourgeois' is a term with an honourable history, but some might be put off by its Marxist colour (always a problem of public discourse in Australia), and I myself have trouble in imagining the sleek and comfortable bourgeoisie maintaining their privileges in the average grey chicken coop. 'Academic' suffers the same disadvantage. 'Privileged' we must keep in reserve for the posh private schools. Paulo Freire's 'banking education' is very good indeed, and should be kept alive because it not only describes a concept of teaching/learning, but also reminds us concretely of the way schools prepare their privileged ones for a life of individual gain. I, however, like 'meritocratic' most because it suggests the functions of school as a training ground for the eventual dominant class, and because it contrasts neatly with 'democratic'.

So for the moment I'll plump for 'meritocratic' as a hold-all word and say that the general aim of alternative schools ought to be to shift from the meritocratic end of the spectrum, where most schools now are, to the democratic end. Of course, we'll have to break this

hoid-all concept down into many parts to discuss it sensibly, but I offer it as a guide to our basic direction. I am interested, in other words, in alternative schools that aim to break away from elitist structures, that want to democratize teaching and learning, that are developing a content adequate to mass education.

By implication I'm not interested in the schools that go in heavily for self-fulfilment and creativity. These may well be experimental but they'd have to be much more than that to be alternative.

When we take meritocracy-democracy as our axis we are asserting the prime importance of certain facts, such as:

- ☐ that the majority of Australians get only a shade more than halfway through the primary-secondary-tertiary-work training educational system;
- ☐ that the content of schooling derives from the top — is academic in the narrow sense of the term — and serves only those who will get to the top;
- ☐ that the general culture is not an adequate educational substitute for the majority — on the contrary it assumes continuing ignorance.

Maybe we should add that these are not accidental features of a normally good-willed system. Any change will be very bitterly fought against. One pointer to how 'alternative' you are is the amount of opposition you raise. You must always be preoccupied with consolidating your support.

Disappear: it's the last mission of your class

You'll have a better idea of where your support may lie if you're able to place yourself historically. For example, in the long view, state education is in itself an alternative, and a very substantial one at that. The original tradition was the private school, and it is of course still preferred by the ruling class and its sycophants. So state schooling, although meritocratic, is by its very nature, a shift along the axis towards democracy, the posh schools representing an even older tradition of privilege. Bunyip artistocratic you might say.

So, our support is in the state system, or rather among those aiming to extend the democratic nature of state schooling. It is not in the posh private schools. If it occasionally appears to be, that is an aberration of no lasting value, and probably a danger sign. There is no future in alliances with private alternative schools, nor in attempting to take over some of their clientele. You are not trying to replace state schooling but to improve it. To democratize it.

This is a very important point. Plenty of teachers and parents — many of them luminaries of the left — have fallen into the trap of thinking that what's not possible in state schools can be achieved in private ones. Always, of course, with fat fees. Alternative culture. Counter privilege. A dead end.

Of course among the so-called independent schools there is an entire system, the Catholic system — not to be confused with the posh private schools, some of which are also Catholic. These, along with the Greek and Jewish schools, are the great reminder of the Ethnic Alternative.

They were in fact conceived as an alternative to the alternative-popular schools certainly, but for the Irish. Though I would not now argue for denominational schools, we must accept that the state system has yet to come to grips with the ethnic alternative. Sydney Road Community School, in obliging second language study and struggling to keep Greek and Italian teaching going, is doing its job in that direction. Brunswick East High School is a true pioneer of alternative schooling.

But we were talking about support. The natural allies of alternative schools must be those who are done over by the present meritocracy. Unfortunately, their support cannot be automatically counted on. Meritocracy is propped up by powerful myths of inborn intelligence, of social mobility. Australians do not easily accept notions of structural discrimination — a notion which is fundamental to European political discourse. You have to work hard for your support. You need to see the value of school councils, understand the balance necessary between autonomy and responsibility, stay open to criticism, grow patient, see the possibilities of larger alliances within the union movement, keep developing your analysis of society.

I learnt that other people's problems are the same as mine. To overcome them together is politics. To do so alone is greed.

Comrade, education is an act of solidarity. Some have said an act of love. It is based on a willingness to share what is prized. At Scotch it is privilege disguised as Culture. Around Brunswick it is the power to communicate. The bourgeois school expresses its solidarity with the bourgeoisie. The alternative school belongs to those who miss out now, in the name ultimately of everyone. And since the reasons why they miss out are political ones, your solidarity is a political commitment.

This is a fact you've been rather coy and confused about — maybe in Australia with good reason, because the establishment is expert at isolating red witches and hunting them. You'd profit perhaps from a spell in Italy or France, where the body politic doesn't wear a fig leaf. There's no gain in trying to conceal the simple fact that school is connected in important ways with political realities, and that school policies reflect or express definable social and political attitudes. The meritocratic school of course scarcely needs to declare itself — in fact, can pretend to be non-political. It may even misappropriate the term pluralist. You will have to battle more openly — but to open things up is itself part of the battle.

For instance it's important that you don't concede the useful, common political terms to the opposition, and fall back yourself on obscure or terrifying jargon. As I see it, we're not in the business of conceiving alternatives to democracy or to pluralism. Rather, we're out to salvage them from the decadence they've fallen into. Pluralism, as we know, is used to justify anti-democratic choices — such as posh private schools, for example. But this shouldn't stop you from asserting the essentially democratic pluralist aims of the progressive forces in the country — forces to which an alternative schools movement rightly belongs.

The fact is you've avoided being explicit about where school fits into the political context. Maybe for fear of frightening people off

or being closed down, school being by popular myth and official regulation non-political. Maybe because the alternative school tradition leads you to put individual development and self-expression above collective and class issues. Or maybe the counter-culture led you that way.

Anyway, you can see it in your kids. They are not politicized in the straight-out sense of the word, that is, conscious of the obvious political dimensions of their society. The middle class kids have had their hippyism accentuated. The working class ones don't have a solid enough body of facts and analyses to launch off from. Too many are apt to know more about ecology and alternatives to the family than they are about the fundemental social and political organisations that bring about environmental or social crises. Your own diffidence or rejection of politics shows through.

But the diffidence is damaging. Your alternative is to be genuinely democratic in education, instead of meritocratic. This has clear political resonances. The new content you want derives from an analysis of the history and structure of ideas and society. Political choices are fundamental to a whole heap of basic content, to linguistic and social education most obviously, but also to scientific and artistic education. The content of meritocractic education derives from a series of political choices, by now so ingrained that they have an air of objectivity. What you are doing by proposing an alternative is reopening the political choice. You want to propose that a new democratic choice be made.

Weakness of political and social analysis, like ignorance of teaching methodology or lack of hard work, will vitiate your eventual school program. Obviously, I'd like to suggest, however, that political diffidence may be the key weakness — the one that makes not just some difference but all the difference. Freire insists that his success in teaching literacy — where other programs had failed — was due not simply to his new linguistic analysis and creative method, but fundamentally to his raising of political consciousness in his learners. Have you studied what it is that causes some of your kids to make great leaps forward? Consciousness has a way of striking suddenly. From being immersed in an oppressive or deadening culture, the mind is liberated by a perception of the whole structure of the culture. The change of dimension, being from part to whole, is rapidly achieved and dramatic. Of course, all the detail has to be fitted in, but once the structure is comprehended each detail will have its place and large new masses of data and abstractions will be quickly and eagerly absorbed. Of course, consciousness strikes most easily in fertile ground. But your average student is strong soil, in need of much cultivation and renewal. You can't afford to be just a happy sower of seeds. You're a labourer.

Schools that select destroy the culture

From the middle of the 1960s the alternative schools in Victoria have concentrated heavily on openness, on what the Italians call more precisely the right to study. Maryvale led the way, with a truly crusading non-competitiveness. Upgrading, and group work were dominant features of the CAB schools — Moreland, Ferntree Gully, and their successors. Ron Reed attempted to establish a full six-year

cycle of universal secondary education. The VSTA, the community schools and now the STC group have pushed at the barriers between secondary and tertiary studies.

The right to study, though it is far from achieved, is clearly one alternative banner that may be carried anywhere — an issue which precisely divides meritocrats from democrats. Sooner or later a democratic society must acknowledge and enact the right of everyone to study.

So far, the right to study has been asserted in fairly simple forms —as non-competitive assessment and progress through school, and as open entry into tertiary education. It's time now to elaborate the concept and connect it more precisely to qualifications, to work and to the raising of the general level of democratic culture. What works inside a few schools is valuable as a demonstration of possibilities. The ultimate solutions appropriate to the whole society have still to be worked out, and involve of course much more than schools.

At this point, a very important objection can be made. What is the good of achieving the right to study within an unreformed system of schooling, qualification and work? Which is another way of saying that an isolated policy of non-grading and of open entry is no good. Eventually you have to develop a full democratic program. It's the old problem of structural change — necessary but only part of the story. In our case, however, the real fly in the ointment is that school itself depends on much larger social structures and attitudes.

We have to take a punt. I think the problem is more or less answered in being posed. You need a complete program, fashioned with the knowledge that social revolutions are not made in schools or by children. Certainly the pay-offs will be spasmodic, but it's hard to imagine any more constructive choices. Leave the schools? Where for? Utopia?

He would have been better off, studying the Metal Industry Award.

Given that the structural solutions alone are inadequate (though necessary), let's try now to name some of the vital other issues. I see them falling into two large categories. One I'll call the Institution, the other the Purpose. I'll start with the Institution.

The institution of school, which is our means of transmitting the best of the cultural heritage and, we hope, helping to renew what has decayed, naturally runs the usual institutional risk of becoming isolated from the culture it should rightly react with. The relationship between what is learnt in schools and what happens outside and after school becomes attenuated. The curriculum is worked through for its own internal ends — the gaining of a certificate, the passing of a standard or whatever.

Illich's de-schooling has, of course, made much of this. He has shown how the school system keeps the meritocratic industry going and thereby contributes as much to ignorance and social importance as it does to knowledge. His solution, however, his learning networks and the like, are airy. He virtually asks us to sit tight and prepare for the Second Coming.

I think most experimental schools in recent years have tried out versions of Illich learning networks; by offering mammoth ranges of choices, importing practitioners and non-teacher experts into the

school, sending kids out to get direct experience of situations. And Illich or not, there are now plenty of schools with work experience programs.

Offering wide choice has its quicksands, which we'll observe later, but the linking of school to work and to the social use of knowledge is necessary. The point has wide acceptance in theory and need not be insisted on. What you must consider is how the relating of school to work can continue to be a democratizing process, rather than a gentler way of adapting the work force to the market. And this once again calls into question our perception of a more democratic society. Such perception of course can only be stated in very general terms — they await their historical working out. We can say, however, that a democratic conception of work will require the general sharing of power over production, and the control of technological development by human needs; and that these needs have to be judged in their total planetary and future contexts, rather than in local and immediate terms.

From this you can perhaps deduce a curriculum which can bring some of the problems of work into schooling. Certainly an alternative curriculum could not confine itself to helping students choose the most individually satisfying work for themselves. Nor could it aim solely to qualify all its students to a high level so that their personal choices will be wide. Such aims do admittedly diverge from meritocratic practice, and can improve the future lives of small groups of the presently unprivileged. But as general aims they fall down before the realities of work, which for the majority of workers cannot be said to be satisfying and is, by deliberate design, undemocratic. The satisfaction of much work, in other words, comes from its transformation or from the possibilities it offers to struggle for a more democratic society, basically through the trade union and political party system.

I don't want to suggest by this that some work doesn't have even the potential to be satisfying in itself. But I know, as you do, from experience, that even in situations devised on the best Marxist principles of unalienated labour, a problem of shit work keeps surfacing: but I'm of the optimistic school that thinks the problem has to be worked on, and that in any case, satisfaction comes from the whole context rather than from detail. Agreed, it's no great shakes cleaning the dunnies, but it's satisfying to see them kept clean by their users, rather than by the life work of another person. A counsel of perfection, this, which usually needs to be tempered by a realistic acceptance of the value of division of labour.

So the organisation of work, its potential for social good or decay, has to be discussed in a critical context. And to achieve a greater degree of this we should be perhaps thinking of making substantial links between the work system and the education system. Here two possibilities suggest themselves: (1) introduce protracted work periods into the upper secondary-tertiary system, and (2) establish as a right opportunities for people at work to resume general education as well as occupational re-training.

The first of these possibilities regularly gets an airing when tertiary selection is talked about — at least when it's talked about calmly. Some colleges, in fact, practise it implicitly by deliberately taking in

large numbers of mature age students. Our concern however would be to see whether a really substantial alternation between work and upper secondary school would bring the realities of society into the curriculum.

The second possibility is one very much in evidence in Italy where, as a result of the student and union struggles following 1968, workers have gained the right to 150 hours of study in the boss's time. Again, such an initiative brings into serious question the validity of studies as they developed within the closed school-university system. New analyses of subject matter and teaching methods become imperative.

True culture, which up to now no one has ever possessed, is made up of two things: belonging to the people and knowing the language.

Your working class kids of course belong to the people. But they do not know the language. They are at the bottom of the power pyramid, and all the meritocratic system offers is that some may scale the pyramid if they know the code words. The pyramid, however, will stay put, even though there's room for a few to change places in it. This possibility of ascending is defined by the meritocrats as democracy.

Your alternative has no such pyramid, hence no ascent. It does not of course lapse into the absurdity of saying that everyone is, or even wants to be, capable of everything. Your concern is to give everyone one of the basic prerequisites to democratic power which is the capacity to understand what's going on, to express one's own ideas. School cannot do more, and is extremely lucky to do as much.

Literacy, then, is the great aim of your curriculum. But this too is a term to be wrested from the meritocrats, who see it as a precious possession under grave threat from mass education. Maybe you need to talk more persistently about democratic literacy, to distinguish your idea from the present decadent variety.

Democratic literacy is control of language at the level needed to run our society. It is understanding others and making yourself understood. It is something we all have to work at and must all be able to share. It is achieved through concrete subject matter, not as an abstract, mechanical skill. Knowledge of the subject and knowledge of the language are two sides of the coin. But a democratic knowledge.

I sympathize with your present concern to build a working class curriculum but I'd rather see this as part of the drive to develop a democratic curriculum. We do need a good analysis of our heritage of working class culture. We do also have to keep in mind that we're not merely trying to implant a different class culture. But I don't like thinking of the present division as a choice of alternatives. A democratic culture will be a synthesis of these conflicting class cultures. Thus, we do not expect our kids to throw away their working class, or ethnic, language heritage, but we do not either expect them to know only that. We build on that with respect but with a knowledge of its limitations, till we achieve also ease with the various registers of power.

Don't romanticize working class culture, or teenage culture. Of course, both are formative cultures for your students, and both represent a real world to which school is a contrast. Unless school

clearly touches on the worlds of work and teenage life, it will appear to some as irrelevant and to others as a choice — in taking one the other is rejected. But it must be obvious that the simple solution of immersion in these sub-cultures is no solution. They are partial cultures, exploited and therefore to some degree deadening. Clearly they are the ground on which consciousness will be built, and out of a critical analysis of them and of rival sub-cultures a democratic culture may grow. They do still require, like all heritages, a critical confrontation by the inheritor. School should provide the means for this confrontation.

A union of mothers and fathers capable of reminding you that we're the ones who pay you to serve us.

Calling your alternative a community school opens up some daunting theoretical perspectives. At face value it suggests that you mean to combine with the families who send you your students and with the democratic elements of the surrounding community to devise and provide a democratic curriculum. But I bet your school is leagues away from the local conception of what a school ought to be.

Not that I think the community view must prevail. Your model of school may be much better. But how right is it to impose it just like that? Your idea of a community school is actually a counter to my earlier statement that schools pass on the cultural heritage. And I stand corrected. This is a very institutional definition. It needs challenging. In modern industrial societies schools have taken over from families (and from trades). For other reasons, the family is also under attack from the Left. Your alternative school reflects this ambiguous pincer attack. On the one hand, you aim to reverse the professionalization of education and restore the school to its community. On the other hand, you hold back from alliances with parents because you cannot reconcile your view of students' rights and duties with theirs. In practice your community school sometimes blesses courses specifically designed to attack the family as a social institution.

So where do you go from there? I can only suggest that you wade in a bit deeper, let some real power over curriculum go into the hands of parents and democratic community representatives and see what happens.

There were no breaks. No holidays even on Sundays.

The other general category of issues I've labelled questions of Purpose. What approaches to school do you want your school community to have? Here I want to mention only two things: the idea of study as work, and the idea of collective achievement.

Alternative schools have unfortunately inherited a permissive tradition. Progressive methods have nearly always involved a lot of freedom for the kids to choose what they will do, how they will do it and often whether they'll do it. The idea is to make them autonomous and self-reliant.

If this direction is followed rationally, it is surely the right way to go. But it does presuppose kids of Spartan will and vast personal resources — the sort you're aiming for rather than those you've got.

Most of your kids will muck about as often as they can. They'll work when there's a bit of pressure, or occasionally for a sparkling performer. Which you're not. You're a pretty ordinary teacher who has to get there by planning, routine and moral pressure.

Study, which is the distinguishing activity of school, should be treated socially as work. Eventually, I think, it should be paid as work, once people reach the age at which they can be legally employed. And the bludgers should experience odium and sanctions.

This of course makes your life unpleasant, although enforcing a clear pattern may not be any more enervating than trying to drag a pattern and a purpose out of a vague, anarchic situation. At the moment, you are in the position of having virtually no support. You yourself have taken away some of the most obvious goads to work — strictly set courses, tight routines, periodic tests, major exams. In context they were doing more harm than good — their effect was anti-democratic. But your replacement systems have been a bit noble savage in inspiration, very reliant on goodwill, self-discipline, internal motivation. Sometimes they've not been systems of work at all but merely systems of choice for those (too few) who felt like working.

You and your fellow teachers are also divided among yourselves. Some of you want to tighten things up and get more work done. Others are still hung up on being authoritarian, or will only work from where the kids are at, and hence are prepared to wait till the kids come round to work. Some want to know what and how the kids *think*, others what and how they *feel*.

So there's no easy way through. The tradition has given us study as the pursuit of the leisured or the young (the wealtheir they are, the longer they stay young). The alternative tradition, if anything, makes study even more leisured — something to do when it feels right. Yet one look at the majority of your kids — whom the meritocratic school fails, for whom the democratic school must exist — tells you that they have an enormous job in front of them, certainly not calling for increased leisure. And your picture of the future shows study more and more fitted into a democratic and satisfying world of work.

You do need to take stock of where your forces and allies lie. You can't leave it to each separate teacher to inspire motivation and whip along work. You have to go in for school-wide planning, priorities, rules, customs, sanctions. You have to keep preaching and deepening understanding of the democratic purpose of the work. You have to do this with the kids, their families and the community, so that on all sides the democratic commitment of the school is understood and reinforced. The whole school has to see itself as setting very high, proud standards in study and in communication and working together to achieve them.

Until the slowest understood the others didn't go ahead.

The slowest at Barbiana was not only the kid without background. It was also the unwilling kid. Until he understood, the others didn't go ahead. Is it possible to be as collectively minded as that? The meritocratic school of course is the opposite — a school for individualists. But where do you stand on the issue of individualism? How much weight do you give in your aims to personal development, self-fulfilment, self-expression? How much of your work is structured

on personal choice? How much of the kids' commitment is left to individual decision?

A democratic school would look first to the common ground, to the language (which is also subject matter) that everyone needs to speak and understand. To understand others and be understood by them is the common work and the first imperative. By all means, set aside time and opportunity to follow particular interests, but keep the main work in the centre of focus. And restructure the subject matter so that it can be worked on co-operatively. You can't always be blamed for unequal results, but you are responsible for what you present, and the more advanced have responsibilities towards the less advanced, as have the older for the younger.

Everything I've said here requires detail and practice before it is anything better than pious thoughts. Much of course has already been done. A lot of issues, especially on the relation between school and work, I've mentioned without any theoretical elaboration, which I'd like to do some time soon. I finish with this:

Another aspect of alternative education has lately developed in Victoria, namely the idea of teacher-theorists. The tradition has academics and office experts laying down the shape of schools and curricula. The alternative schools have not only tended to produce their own theorists, but also to make all teachers theorists. A worthy alternative, long overdue.

It would be good if you could expand this tendency in at least two ways: first by bringing teacher theorists together to develop greater solidarity and power in their theory-practice, and then by bringing parents and democratic community representatives into the same process, as now you are beginning to bring in students.

I'm aware that both these things are already happening, but I hope it's no harm to urge bigger and better efforts.

All quotations are from School of Barbiana, *Letter to a Teacher* Libreria Editrice Fiorentina.

3

Crisis of legitimation: Schools, society, and declining faith in education

Svi Shapiro

Source: Svi Shapiro, 'Crisis of legitimation: Schools, society, and declining faith in education', *Interchange*, vol. 15, no. 14, Winter 1984, pp. 26–39.

Jurgen Habermas's notion of a legitimacy crisis in advanced capitalist societies is a concept of enormous importance in the development of a critical analysis of education—but it is a concept that remains sadly underexplored. At the core of Habermas's argument is the assertion that "crisis tendencies pregnant with the future are no longer located immediately in the economic sphere but in the sociocultural sphere: they do not directly concern the reproduction of the material conditions of life but the reproduction of reliable structures of intersubjectivity" (McCarthy, 1979, pp. 358,359). In this sense, he places his critical analysis outside of orthodox Marxism, which emphasizes economic factors to the exclusion of superstructural considerations. For Habermas, the problems of what he calls "system integration" (broadly understood as problems of the economic sphere) lead to crisis only when they pose a threat to "social integration," that is, when they undermine the consensual foundations of social institutions.

Central to Habermas's analysis of the legitimation crisis of institutions in capitalist society is what he sees as the repoliticization of the public sphere. The vastly expanded activity of the state in areas of our social and economic life has subjected ever-increasing sectors of our lives to the rationality of administrative planning and the values of political (as opposed to economic) community.[1] It has moved, if only nominally, increasing areas of social policy from the rule of liberal ideology, with its particularistic interests and private accountability, to the sphere of democratic or general accountability. The rationality of administrative planning

> destroys the unquestionable character of validity claims that were previously taken for granted; it stirs up matters that were previously settled by the cultural tradition in an unproblematic way; and then it furthers the politicization of areas of life previously assigned to the private sphere. For example, educational (especially curricular) planning, the planning of the health system and family planning have the effect of publicizing and thematizing matters that were once culturally taken for granted. ... And this development endangers the civil

> privatism essential to the de-politicized public realm. "Efforts at participation and the plethora of alternative models . . . are indications of this danger, as in the increasing number of citizen's initiatives." (McCarthy, 1979, pp. 369–370)

The expansion of state activities and the consequent politicization of increasing numbers of social and economic concerns have resulted in the need to replace traditional justifications of decisions regarding these concerns with ones that at least appear to express a rational consensus. Whereas before the problems of society (unemployment, inflation, health care, the management of natural resources, and so forth) could be seen as issues that were, fundamentally, to be decided privately and outside the discourse of a public tribunal, they now become subject to the norms of public accountability and social legitimacy. Habermas is in no way overly optimistic about the current potentialities of such public discourse or scrutiny. The public realm, he argues, has largely been reduced to periodic "plebiscites of acclamation." The structural depoliticization of the public sphere is increasingly justified by democratic elite theories or by a technocratic systems perspective; and underpinning it all is a widespread civil privatism—political abstinence combined with an orientation to careers, leisure, and consumption.

It is precisely in the publicizing of matters that were once culturally taken for granted that the present crisis of the legitimacy of schooling in advanced capitalist societies can be found. The crisis of formal education is, in the first instance, one in which the consensual basis and validity claims of schools are increasingly eroded. There are increasing deficits in the legitimacy of the symbols and meanings associated with formal education. I believe it is clear, as Habermas asserts, that the crisis at the sociocultural level is rooted in the problems of system integration. As Habermas argues and I will later elaborate, these system problems are consequences of the increasingly disharmonious connection between education and occupations, but this can only be a partial statement of the problem. In this paper, I attempt to supplement and expand this view of the origins of the legitimation crisis in education with a consideration of what I see as the additional problem of integration. I argue that the crisis of legitimation in education is basically rooted in three distinct areas of ideological and institutional conflict. The first has to do with the results, in educational dysfunctionality, of maintaining a hegemonic form of cultural domination. The second area of conflict arises from the consequences of a social system which, in Althusser's terms, is a "complex unity of uneven instances," that is, a social formation in which the apparatuses of socialization cannot be regarded as necessarily congruent or harmonious in the cultural or ideological meanings they transmit. The final problematic area has to do with the consequences, in educational purposes and goals, of the conflicting aims of liberal and democratic ideology—the conjunction of which represents the defining feature of the bourgeois democratic state. In the next section of the paper, I lay out in more depth these three areas of conflict or dysfunctionality from which I believe the legitimation crisis in education springs. In the final section of the paper, I elaborate some of the concrete manifestations of those areas of conflict in the current policies and structures of schooling.

While scarcely a day passes without some new evidence of the declining

public faith in the efficacy of schooling, surprisingly little attempt has been made to understand this crisis in terms that go beyond the usual platitudes of parental neglect, inadequate school accountability, or the deficiencies of students' attitudes. In this paper, I have sought to place the current situation in a sociological framework that, hopefully, will be both more theoretically compelling and critically useful than those employed in these accounts. Such a framework places the issue of education in the context of questions relating to culture, ideology, and the forms of social domination in capitalist society. In this way, I hope to provide explanations that transcend the usual banalities of media interpretation or the inevitable limitations of common sense.

Educational Legitimacy and Hegemonic Culture

The process of legitimation occurring through the imposition of cultural hegemony implies going beyond a version of socialization that represents a straightforward training of subordinate classes in the values, meanings, and practices of a ruling class. The ideology and culture of bourgeois society are far more than the "isolable meanings and practices of the ruling class ... which get imposed on others" (Williams, 1976, p. 205). As Raymond Williams argues, if it were merely a process of training, manipulation, or socialization, a society's dominant ideology could be thrown off or discarded. It would present itself as onion-like reality, with separable layers that might easily be peeled off. The notion of a dominant culture as something more than the values and meanings of the economically dominant class is rooted in a conception of hegemony elaborated by Antonio Gramsci; it is central to a notion of culture or ideology as an instrument not merely of domination but also of legitimation. It "supposes the existence of something which is truly total, which is not merely secondary or superstructural, like the weak sense of ideology, but which is lived at such a depth, which saturates the society to such an extent, and which, as Gramsci puts it, even constitutes the limits of common sense for most people under its sway (Williams, 1976, pp. 204–205).

The imposition of cultural hegemony implies going beyond a version of ideology in which the subordinate classes are socialized or trained solely in the values and beliefs of the ruling class toward one that incorporates alternative meanings, values, or perceptions of the world. And in order to ensure hegemony, culture must be something more than the product of a single dominant group. It must contain values, meanings, moral and aesthetic judgments that arise from the entire field of human experience—including that of subordinate groups. Only in this way can culture be viewed or felt as anything approaching a legitimate expression of human experience, as a symbolic region that successfully mediates and constitutes a good part, if not the full range, of this experience.

By ensuring that the dominant culture reflects not only the meanings and practices of the dominant class but also of other groups or classes, hegemony ensures the active consent of those in subordinate positions in society. It ensures the effective legitimation of the class structure and the consequent relations of domination and subordination. Williams notes that the dominant culture is a complex unity that contains not only the meanings, values, and

practices of the ruling class but also those that have survived from pre-existing forms of society (what Williams calls the residual culture), as well as the new meanings and practices created alongside the dominant culture. The elements of the residual culture represent a "reaching back to those meanings and values which were created in real societies in the past, and which still seem to have some significance because they represent areas of human experience, aspirations and achievement, which the dominant culture undervalues or opposes, or even cannot recognize" (ibid, p. 207). These may include certain religious values and notions derived from a rural past.

New meanings, values, and practices are referred to by Williams as emergent. Since no dominant culture exhausts the total range of human experience, energy, or intention, the question of which aspects of emergent practices or meanings are to be reached for and, if possible, incorporated—or else extirpated—depends on whether, or to what extent, the dominant class has its interests at stake. The dominant culture must decide whether particular practices are alternative or oppositional; the latter, which clearly challenge what is dominant, must be effectively and rapidly incorporated. While Williams asserts that the line between the two rests on a simple theoretical distinction, it is in reality a very narrow one; it is the difference "between someone who simply finds a different way to live and wants to be left alone with it, and someone who finds a different way to live and wants to change society in its light" (ibid, p. 206).

What must be emphasized in understanding a hegemonic culture is that it represents not the meanings, practices, and values of a single class, but rather that it is a composite containing elements of several different social groups or classes. Active consent is ensured by including not only dominant social interests but also those of subordinate interests. In this sense, the culture must be viewed as containing compromises and concessions by dominant groups, though never so much that the fundamental character of the social structure is threatened. In looking at the nature of education in this light, it is possible to delineate a complex structure containing the interests and ideologies of a variety of social elements (see, for example, Shapiro, 1982b). In the United States, it is possible to distinguish, for example, the extent to which corporate interests have ensured an educational system that is strongly vocational, utilitarian, and professionally oriented. Although sometimes ignored by revisionist or critical theorists of education, this orientation must be set within a structure of meanings and values that reflect the ideology of pre-bourgeois social formations. Such ideology is instrumental in the persistence of non-vocational goals, such as the notion of the "educated" individual, trained through exposure to an appropriate academic and liberal curriculum. And to whatever degree such goals have been limited by encroaching vocational and utilitarian concerns (competency testing being the most recent example of such limitations), it is necessary to recognize the extent to which schooling is still influenced by notions having to do with the transmission of a select body of ideas, knowledge, and belief regarded as constituting *the* cultural heritage and representing the fund of superior cultural capital.

In addition to the influence of residual culture in education, it is also possible to identify characteristics of an emergent culture. Notions such as student relevance, choice, and participation have formed important and recur-

ring educational demands; they have been a characteristic part of the cultural or ideological challenges put forth by subordinate groups during periods of radical social upheaval.

It should be clear, then, that the structure of education in the United States must be understood as a composite of cultural tendencies representing competing social classes and groups. It is also important to understand that the resulting structure of educational practices and purposes is not a static or immutable one. With the continuing struggle between social interests, the structure of education undergoes continuous shifts in emphasis, intention, and purpose. Thus, recent changes such as the elimination of curricular electives, pass/fail grading, emphasis on the basics, and increasing vocationalism must all be located within the shifting nature of the cultural (and political) compact underpinning hegemony.

The hegemonic culture of bourgeois society, reflected in the composite character of education, ensures a far more powerfully rooted system of meanings, values, practices, and so forth than one merely imposed by a dominant class. At the same time, the attempt to ensure a culture and an education perceived or experienced as legitimate generates significant contradictions and conflicts in the resulting cultural and educational structures. While the desired effects of hegemony may include both legitimacy and effectiveness, this (as we will see) is not now the case. The attempt to ensure a legitimate structure of education through the inclusion of, or compromise between, separate and sometimes opposing interests, purposes, and meanings also makes for a structure that is ineffective in some fundamental ways. And such ineffectiveness ensures an erosion of the very legitimacy it was intended to support. As we will see, the resulting structure of education is experienced as seriously flawed.

Contradiction and Autonomy: Socialization in Advanced Capitalist Societies

I now turn from a consideration of the process of hegemony in the legitimation crisis of education to the second area of concern: the relations between schooling and the other elements of the socialization process in the transmission of ideology and culture. Here, the heritage of mechanistic versions of Marxist sociology has supported the view of a socialization process affected by institutions directly determined by ruling class groups and expressing their ideology in an uncompromised fashion. This, I believe, is the implicitly stated perspective of much of the critical analysis of schooling in the United States, found in studies relating to the hidden curriculum, correspondence theory, revisionist educational history, and so on. This perspective is rooted, at least in part, in economistic views of the role of the state in capitalist society, in which the state is seen as no more than a simple tool or instrument to be manipulated at will by a ruling class. And within this view of the state, the apparatuses of ideological transmission (schools, media, etc.) are understood to be entirely and uncompromisingly controlled by the dominant economic groups and to express uniformly their interests and ideology (see Connell, 1978). These institutions are believed to express a single class viewpoint. This idea is reinforced by the totalistic perspective of some critical theorists,

notably Herbert Marcuse. Here, the control of production technologies in advanced capitalist societies ensures a populace almost entirely adjusted to the consumerist ideology of the dominant class. The social system is seen as a seamless web of interrelated parts in which values, meanings, purposes, and so forth coalesce in an unassailable unity of ideology and culture (see MacIntyre, 1970).

To whatever extent such views are valid, the attempt to describe the institutions of socialization in this way tends, in the words of Ralph Miliband (1970, p. 59), "to obscure the difference in this respect between these political systems and systems where ideological institutions are indeed part of a state monopolistic system of power. In the former system [i.e., liberal capitalism], ideological institutions do retain a very high degree of autonomy; and are therefore the better able to conceal the degree to which they do belong to the system of power in capitalist society." The separation of powers cannot be regarded as mere illusion. It is fundamental to the process of legitimation in liberal capitalism. The danger of assuming that the bourgeois democratic state is no more than an incipient totalitarianism is ever present in critical analyses of schooling and studies of other areas of ideological transmission and domination. Such confusion can lead, ultimately, to disastrous political consequences. (As Miliband points out, the Weimar Republic and the Nazi State were both capitalist class states, but 50 million people died, partly, at least, in consequence of the fact that the German Comintern, at a crucial moment in time, saw no real difference between the two forms of the state.) For our own purposes, the view of a monolithic, or at least highly integrated, culture and ideology ignores the significance—and reality—of the separation of powers. This separation represents a cornerstone of the political legitimation of the bourgeois democratic state. It can be dismissed neither as mere illusion nor as insignificant in the process of ideological consent formation.

While I have argued that the differentiated and relatively autonomous nature of institutions in bourgeois society is highly significant in the process of political legitimation, its reality must be set within the social division of society and the resulting constellation of contradictory and uneven instances of the social system. This notion is at the heart of Althusser's characterization of the social system as a "complex structured unit" (quoted in Callinicos, 1976, ch. 2). Its complexity is rooted in the fact that it is a unity of distinct, relatively autonomous instances with different modes of development. While these are unified through their determination by the economy in the last instance, they do not form a homogeneous entity.

This theme is also argued by Goran Therborn, who asserts that while the state in capitalist society is

> in a fundamental sense, always one, the level of interaction of its apparatuses varies considerably, and it should not be taken for granted that they share a common class character. For the state is the concentrated expression of a highly complex set of class relations which are refracted in disjunctures of varying profundity between the different apparatuses. Within limits imposed by the general nature of the state, it is especially probable that the class character of its diverse apparatuses will vary with the link between the tasks of the apparatus and the concerns of classes rooted in the mode of production. (1978, p. 41)

Thus, suggests Therborn, it might be expected in capitalist states that the army would retain feudal traits longer than the fiscal apparatus; or that the agricultural apparatus would have a more petty bourgeois character; or that the welfare apparatus, while remaining bourgeois, would be affected by its close relationship to the working class.

The notion of the diversity and relative autonomy of ideological apparatuses in bourgeois society (including apparatuses such as schools whose explicit purpose is the transmission of ideology and apparatuses like the welfare and health care systems, which are the focus for particular kinds of ideological commitments) is clearly expressed by Ian Connell in his discussion of *Monopoly Capitalism and the Media* (1978). In refuting critical analyses of the media that purport to show a "tight correspondence between the economic and the cultural" so that the products of the media in capitalist society do no more than present the ideology of the dominant economic interests, Connell argues that such an approach

> fails to *identify and to take account of the relatively autonomous level of communicative-ideological determination*. The choice of format, for instance, within a given sector of the media is never made solely with reference to the criteria of cost-effectiveness, but also, and moreover, *in the first instance* with reference to the criteria of communicative-effectivity. (p. 72, his emphases)

Indeed, Connell argues, there is no such thing as *the* ideology of the ruling class or of the working class: "Apart from the dominant ideology, there exist only loosely federated sectional ideologies—fragmentary, localized 'sub-cultures'" (ibid, p. 77). Thus, Connell does not give a standard radical critique of television; he argues that television does not perform its ideological work on behalf of the ruling class by being biassed in any simple conspiratorial sense:

> The coverage of problematic issues and events offered by television programmes does not systematically prefer any one of the sectional ideologies peculiar to these ruling classes. . . . Their relative independence from each of these will also be maintained by presenting themselves as "our" representatives; they ask their questions on behalf of that seemingly non-aligned "general public." (ibid, pp. 78–79)

What should by now be clear is that while recognizing the role of ideology and culture in the reproduction of class society, no characterization of ideology as a simple, coherent, or monolithic entity will do. We have seen that the relative separation and autonomy of the apparatuses with which ideology is transmitted is fundamental to the continued perception of democratic legitimacy. As a result, particular components of the social system in no way express identical ideological/cultural messages. It is precisely this differentiation in values, meanings, beliefs, and moral and aesthetic judgments associated with different parts of the social system that ensures the sometimes conflicting, dissonant, or contradictory tendencies in the cultural reproduction of society. We cannot count on the imposition of any kind of entirely unified or totally integrated ideological structure as the means to maintain the existing contours of society. It may indeed be contradictions rather than uniformities that characterize relations between components of the ideological/cultural superstructure. The

problems associated with the legitimation of education must be viewed in a context within which conflict as much as correspondence marks the relationship between the values, meanings, and norms embodied in schooling and those that characterize other areas of the socialization process in advanced capitalist societies. It is a context in which what Daniel Bell (1976) refers to as the "cultural contradictions of capitalism" may be understood as leading to the undermining of traditional motivational structures.

Schooling and the Democratic State

The third and final area in which I will delineate the roots of the legitimation crisis in schooling is in the contrasting purposes and goals of liberal ideology, the conjunction of which represents the defining feature of the bourgeois democratic state. In his early work, Marx contended that modern man is a divided creature—he is both democratic citizen and bourgeois individual. As the former, he is expected to live up to universal criteria; as the latter, he behaves according to his egotistical needs (see Avineri, 1970). While man's existence in the social economic realm is governed by the ideology of liberalism, with its notion of the unfettered pursuit of personal gain, advancement, achievement, and so forth, his life as a member of the political community is formed (at least in principle) according to notions of universal rights, obligations, responsibilities, and relations grounded in human mutuality and equality. While the bourgeois individual receives his legitimation in the ownership of property and the determination (or apparent determination) in the market according to the value of his labor, the legitimation of the democratic citizen rests on the democratic will-formation of the society as a whole. The distinct character of bourgeois democratic society has been the juxtaposition of the effects of liberal ideology in the social economic realm (hierarchical relations of authority, unequal distribution of wealth and power, etc.) with the implications of democratic ideology (popular control of authority, universality of rights, mutuality of obligations, etc.).

To whatever extent the state, according to Marxist perspective, is the executive of the bourgeoisie, the vehicle for ensuring appropriate conditions for the reproduction of the capitalist order, it cannot, given the imperatives of democratic values, be permitted to appear that way. The attempt to reconcile the fundamental purpose of the state in the operation of the economy and the maintenance of social control with the popular democratic notions that surround it results in what Bertell Ollman calls the formation of the "illusory community" (1976). The civil order poses as the objectification of the universal interests of the community, as opposed to the particularistic, self-seeking, and divisive interests of economic society. As Alan Wolfe (1977) has shown, the role of the state has changed (and continues to change) in the development of capitalism. As the "nightwatchman" in earlier phases of capitalist history, the state appeared to stand substantially outside the dynamic of the economic process. Increasingly, it has assumed a more central and visible role in this process of capital formation and accumulation, providing the necessary infrastructure and, increasingly, directly purchasing commodities. The result of

this has been a politicizing of what had previously appeared as problems and conflicts in the economic process. The state is now expected (as the result of its claim to legitimacy through the process of democratic will-formation) to be the guarantor of last resort for economic growth, monetary stability, high employment, and so forth. What were problems or issues of a hitherto autonomous economic realm have now become the definite responsibility of the state and the political apparatus. And, as Habermas notes, what was hitherto a crisis of belief in the economic domain alone is now also a crisis of the legitimacy of the political system.

In looking at the role of the educational system in reproducing the structure of capitalist society, I believe that critical analysis has erred in emphasizing school, almost exclusively, as a component of the economic order. It must be seen as part of not only the economic order but also of the state apparatus, that is, of the political order (see Shapiro, 1982a). While schools do clearly generate a differentially socialized work force for a hierarchical and bureaucratic occupational structure, they must also provide experiences that ensure continuity in our perceptions of bourgeois democratic society. In this sense, schools occupy a unique position in the institutional nature of capitalist society. They contain, at one and the same time, both the economic and the political moments of bourgeois ideology. While they must transmit an ideology based in the values of the market place, they must also, in certain respects, attempt to represent a field of democratic and classless values that are the antithesis of this ideology. From such a perspective, it is possible to see how the comprehensive high school may be understood as the quintessential bourgeois form of educational organization. Indeed, it is not accidental that this is the form increasingly found in liberal capitalist societies. It makes clear the unique role of the school in having to conform to both the economic and the political values of capitalist society. Within this institution are juxtaposed egalitarian political and legal forms with hierarchical and unequal economic practices. This configuration is reflected in the commitment of the comprehensive high school to provide equality of access to the progeny of all citizens, while at the same time dispensing differentiated forms of knowledge and educational experience (and, hence, socioeconomic inequality) to those same individuals. In precisely analogous ways, the visible absorption of the economic crisis into the realm of the state, which has led to a de-legitimation of the political domain, is parallelled by the de-legitimation of schools as they provide a context for the attempt to reconcile the implication of democratic values (mutuality, universal responsibility, and collective obligation) with the egotistical, particularistic, and hierarchical imperatives of the market. At both the macrocosmic level of the political system and at the institutional level of public education, expectations raised by democratic ideology are increasingly confronted, and frustrated, by imperatives that have their source in the market economy of a class-divided society. The effects of this confrontation on the legitimacy of education in advanced capitalist states are examined below.

The Legitimacy Crisis of Schools

In the preceeding sections, I have briefly considered some sources of the legitimation crisis as they pertain to schooling in the United States and in other liberal capitalist societies. In the remainder of this paper, I suggest some of the ways in which this crisis, developing from these sources, is manifested at both levels of pedagogy and curriculum, as well as in the institutional structure and systemic process.

I suggested earlier that to look upon education as an expression of cultural hegemony means to take seriously the view that the dominant forms of curriculum and pedagogy represent not the imposition of a single class view of these activities but a composite structure of diverse and sometimes conflicting social practices and ideas. For example, we need to see that the vocational (i.e., bourgeois) character of contemporary educational practice continues, to a large extent, to be wedded to pre-bourgeois educational forms. It is not without reason that so many students (of all social classes) complain of the "irrelevance" of the academic and liberal curriculum and, indeed, passively or otherwise, resist it. While basic skills, competency-oriented instruction, and career education may represent less than stimulating school experiences, they can at least be understood in terms of prevailing technical norms; whatever they may be lacking in intrinsic satisfaction, they do at some level appear to make sense and are perceived as useful or relevant. The same cannot be said for academic studies that purport to be the conduit for humanistic or cultural notions, in the sense of a body of knowledge, beliefs, and aesthetic judgments that provide understanding, meaning, and significance for human endeavors. While such notions may have made eminent sense in the gentlemanly education of 19th-century England, when schooling was closely identified with exposure to the select traditions of knowledge and belief in a way that would supply a coherent sense of meaning to human activity, they are increasingly unable to meet such goals. Claims to an essential or coherent body of truths, meanings, and knowledge make little sense in the pervasive and deepening cultural crisis of our time, when meanings and belief disappear in the ever-widening circles of political, economic, and cultural fragmentation. No appeals by conservative critics for a return to the tradition of the Great Books or the Essentials of Western Civilization will be sufficient to cope with the dissonance and incoherence of meanings and belief in contemporary society.

And while skills, competencies, and career training may appear to make sense within the present educational context, even they flounder on the obstacles created as a result of the ideological compromises inherent in the hegemonic process. Pre-bourgeois notions compel the process of education to remain locked within separate and distinct social institutions. Such a separation reflects the division between culture and civilization, in which activities associated with human development or actualization are kept distinct from the practices of the everyday world of work, family, community, politics, and so forth. The resulting separation ensures that school, for all its concern with realistic preparation for adult roles and occupational skills, remains a make-believe world filled with make-believe activities. The institutionally circumscribed nature of schooling ensures that it becomes an increasingly trivial and

peripheral activity in the wider field of individual concerns and purposes.

Where progressivism in education has been a significant force (as often happens during periods when there are strong movements organized around egalitarian and collectivist concerns), there has been the acceptance of a broader social context for educational experience; the city, the community, industry, or the countryside—not just the school—become the accepted context for education (Shapiro, 1979). Such changes are underpinned (not always explicitly) by egalitarian challenges to the selective traditions of cultural values (the elimination or redistribution of cultural capital). Even in more conservative times, hegemony and the imperatives of legitimation ensure that populist cultural tendencies emerge and continue to conflict with traditional and restrictive notions of education and give support to de-schooled notions of educational experience. Thus, for example, the recent Carnegie report on high school education, with its call for less school and more community-based instruction, must be seen not merely as an expression of typically bourgeois demands for more utilitarian educational goals but as an attempt to resolve the crisis of the educational process. It is an attempt to transcend cultural/ideological traditions that have defined education as fundamentally disconnected from the non-school world of students, thereby ensuring that it remain an activity marked by its abstract and scholastic character.

And, too, the legitimacy of schooling is increasingly affected by the contradictions between the values, meanings, and norms of schools and those associated with other areas of human practice and experience. The socialization process in advanced capitalist societies, as I argued above, is characterized at least as much by the contradictory and dissonant nature of culture as by notions of correspondence. The motivational and interpretational structures produced by separate components of the process (television, radio, popular music, films, the family, church, schools, etc.) are moments of a culture that is in conflict and incoherent (Bell, 1976). The conservative perception of moral collapse is not an entirely false understanding of a socialization process in which the traditional sources of meaning and value have been undermined by the contradictory claims of a divided culture.

It is important to recognize that contradictory tendencies in the socialization process are exacerbated by elements within the dominant economic class which tread a fine line between incorporating alternative or oppositional meanings and values into the hegemonic culture and acting as transmitters and disseminators of disruptive subcultures. Thus, for example, regardless of the extent to which the hegemonic process attempts to absorb the emergent characteristics of adolescent culture, frequently containing dysfunctional and sometimes radical proclivities, it continues to represent meanings and values that diverge sharply from the ideological emphasis found in the process of schooling. In advanced capitalist society, the adolescent subculture finds a ready source of dissemination in the culture industry, whose particularistic concerns (markets, ratings, etc.) ensure the transmission of an ideology fraught with values hostile to the traditional bourgeois ethic.

As Hans Dreitzel (1977) argues, it is not merely a problem of youth versus adult culture, soluble simply through reducing the exposure of kids to TV, pop music, and so on. While the overtly political tendencies of the counter-cultural

movement of the 1960s have disappeared, we are left, Dreitzel argues, with a culture deeply divided, a culture in which oppositional or alternative tendencies find continuing and expanding support. Such tendencies are organized around an opposition to an achievement morality and instrumental rationality—the lynchpins of bourgeois culture for 150 years, and whose meanings and values continue to dominate the socialization process connected with schooling. The concerns of this oppositional or alternative culture seek to replace such functional rationality with "organic growth" and to reject the temporality of industrial society; what is advocated is an authentic self rather than the other-directed ego. Proponents of this new culture value spontaneity and fantasy, communal solidarity, communicative experience, and a non-instrumental aesthetic approach to nature. While schooling struggles to maintain a commitment to the achievement-oriented and instrumental concerns of bourgeois culture, the spread of such oppositional or alternative values and meanings into many areas of belief and activity ensures an increasingly contradictory, incoherent, and conflict-ridden process of socialization. Indeed, while school continues to disseminate traditional bourgeois interpretations and values, other parts of the socialization process are increasingly affected by alternative or oppositional notions. Nowhere is this more clear than in the changing nature of the family; feminist critiques of the '60s and '70s have led to an increasing demand for sexual relations grounded in mutuality and communicative experience rather than in instrumentalism and (male) achievement.. Such challenges to traditional bourgeois culture in such important loci of the socialization process ensure the increasing dysfunctionality of the process, undermine the motivational significance of school, and, ultimately, exacerbate the crisis of legitimation of education in capitalist society.

Finally, nowhere has the legitimation problem of education been more clearly instigated than through the juxtaposition of the liberal and democratic goals of bourgeois society. As a result of these contradictory moments, it is possible to predict the unstable, conflict-laden nature of schools. In no other social institution are notions of hierarchy and equality and democracy and authoritarian control forced to co-exist in quite the same proximity. Schools and the educational system have occupied centre stage in the ideological struggles of the society. Such struggles reflect the problematic legitimacy of an institution of the state manifesting tendencies associated with the market and the economic arena. Despite the claim of the schooling process to embody the universal obligations, responsibilities, and dispositions appropriate to the political community, integral parts of this process continue to be those of class, racial, and sexual differentiation.

Habermas notes that with the decline in credibility of the market as a fair mechanism for the distribution of life opportunities, occupational success mediated through formal schooling takes the place of success in the market. He argues that this attempt to reconcile liberal and democratic values, by means of an "equal opportunity to participate in a competition that is regulated so as to neutralize external influences" (1975, p. 81), can be viewed as legitimate only if the following conditions are met: equal opportunity for admission to higher education; non-discriminatory standards of evaluation for

performance in school; synchronous developments of the educational and occupational system; and labor processes whose material structures permit evaluation according to individually accountable achievements.

Habermas notes that while educational justice, in terms of opportunities for admission and standard of evaluation, may have increased in all advanced capitalist countries since World War Two, a counter-tendency can be observed in the other two dimensions.[2] Thus, the expansion of the educational system is becoming increasingly independent of changes in the occupational system. He notes that the connection between formal schooling and occupational success may become looser in the long run. The effect of this is a decrease in the credibility of achievement ideology. Such a tendency is increasingly apparent in the United States, where the worth or "return value" of individual "investment" in schooling is increasingly questioned. Furthermore, notes Habermas, fragmented and monotonous labor processes are increasingly penetrating even those sectors in which an identity could previously be formed through an occupational role: "Intrinsic motivation to achieve is less and less supported by the structure of labor processes in spheres of labor dependent on the market. An instrumentalist attitude to labor is spreading even in traditional bourgeois vocations (middle- and higher-level employees, professionals)" (1985, p. 82).

As schools become less and less able to deliver on their promises, their credibility as agencies mediating the liberal and democrative moments of bourgeois ideology is undermined. While liberal notions meant the acceptance of the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and experiences, schooling, on the other hand, embodied the claim to justice or legitimacy in this distribution. The changing nature of work, as well as its relationship to the educational system, has undermined such claims. The result is not merely the de-legitimation of schooling in capitalist society. More important, it suggests the emergence of a system increasingly transparent to the arbitrary and undemocratic way in which power, status, and resources are conferred. This is a view that forewarns not only the crisis of schools and educational institutions in our society, but a crisis of the society itself.

Notes

1. This expansion of the state into our social and economic life has been brought about through the following: the demands of capitalist development, for example, government subsidies, loan contracts, labor and price policies; improvement of the material and immaterial infrastructures in areas such as transportation, communications, health, housing, research and development; improvement of the productivity of labor through vocational training, etc.; and relief from the social costs of private production by, for example, unemployment compensation, welfare, and ecological repair. In addition, there is the state's general responsibility for the regulation of the economic cycle.

2. Nor can we be too sanguine about notions of educational justice. The effects of the "Correspondence Principle," described by Bowles and Gintis, or of Bernstein's and Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, make clear the way in which educational systems are able to produce and reproduce class inequalities and to legitimate existing hierarchical social relations.

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Class, gender and livelihood? Some implications for education

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Introduction[1]

Australian society is characterised by a number of social divisions which together provide the basis for an extremely disproportionate allocation of the material and social benefits of the society. Generally regarded as most important of these are the divisions of class, gender and ethnicity.[2] Successive government reports over the last decade have demonstrated the extent of the inequalities which exist in each of these aspects of society and have drawn attention to the prospect that more equal educational outcomes may lead to greater quality within the society and hence lessen the degree of social division. Consequently there has been a substantial investment of public monies into programs in schools which are aimed at producing more equal outcomes and hence reducing the extent of social inequalities. Although various innovative and 'humanising' approaches to schooling have emerged from these programs, there have as yet been few apparent changes in the relationship between social division and educational achievement.

However, certain issues have arisen from this approach to achieving social equality. One particular problem has been an emphasis on the effects of schooling, with little attention given to the structure of inequality which is central to the labour process itself, or to the relationship between those in paid employment and those without. This draws attention to the adequacy or otherwise of the explanatory frameworks which have informed the various programs and their effectiveness in providing a direction for action.

It is our view that a major weakness in the existing approach has been its focus on addressing specific social divisions independently, without recognition of their complex interaction in people's daily experience. An analysis of the *interaction* of class, gender and ethnicity in people's everyday lives should be central to explanations of inequality, and hence to programs aimed at effecting change in these circumstances. We shall focus in particular on the experience and outlook which young people bring to making decisions about their progress through school and how they will obtain a livelihood. The significance of these decisions should not be underestimated. The impact of recession and structural change in the economy has had a dramatic impact on the availability of paid employment has had a

dramatic impact on the availability of paid employment for young people, especially those from working-class backgrounds (see Dwyer *et al.* 1984). This is especially serious when the established reliance on wage-labour for individuals and families has been threatened, and there is still strong resistance from employers to the provision of adequate subsistence resources (Piven & Cloward 1982).

Our research on the views of young people towards schooling and their hopes for the future suggests that in the face of worsening unemployment, their overriding concern is with how they will obtain a livelihood as adult members of society. We woulkd suggest that this concern should be central to educational programs which attempt to redress the circumstances of inequality. This paper includes:

(a) a review of the context and framework for redressing inequality established by the Karmel Report in 1973;
(b) a brief overview of the major govenrment programs, and their implications;
(c) a consideration of the findings of our own research;
(d) an outline of the basis for an alternative approach;
(e) an exploration of the implications of this research and analysis;
(f) a discussion of possibilities for action in educational arenas.

The initial framework of inequality programs

The policies, rationales and programs introduced by the Schools Commission have provided the basis for both the material and theoretical attempts to achieve educational equality. In 1973, the Karmel Report outlined a perspective on equality and inequality which has been the subject of debate for most of the subsequent decade. Yet while that Report was responsible for the Disadvantaged Schools Program, it also recommended structural arrangements which ensured that the objective of educational quality could not be achieved. A recent Australian Teachers' Federation Research Paper (Marginson 1983) has clearly documented the significance of the Karmel Report in legitimating an apparent consensus between the public and private sectors of schooling, in return for an enormous quantitative material expansion and extensive modernisations in the administrative framework. Marginson suggests that the key to this apparent contradiction lay in the Karmel Report's failure to address the roots of inequalities: it

> '. . . contained no analysis of the social role of the public schooling and of schooling in its various forms, and no overt analysis of the relations between the sectors—although these relations are central to the problem of equality of outcomes in schooling'.
>
> (Marginson 1983; p.2)

For example, the Report paid little attention to data on the relative proportion of HSC students in the elite non-government, non Catholic schools, or to the even greater disproportion in the distribution of university places, Commonwealth scholarships, and entrance to the elite faculties such as medicine and law, even though this information was readily available. Marginson comments:

> A deeper analysis would have demonstrated that as well as dominating the distribution of the rewards, the elite private schools helped to *define* the rewards, and the extent of their limitation, through their role in HSC related curriculum and assessment committees, and their interaction with the universities . . . the Report left this whole apparatus of sectoral privilege and domination untouched and unquestioned.
>
> (Marginson 1983, p.6)

Instead, the Karmel Report adopted a narrow and economistic approach as the basis for the consensus, and proposed a model of resource equalisation between schools as the means by which educational equality would be achieved. Furthermore, a funding structure was established which ensured that a minimum proportion of government funding would be available for private schools, especially those in the Catholic system. By contrast, the amount of funding made available for the Disadvantaged Schools Program was relatively small, an almost tokenistic response to the appalling conditions which existed in many public schools. This funding has proved to be ineffectual in a context where the existence of elite private schools, whose raison d'etre depends on the failures of the government system, was strengthened politically, and eventually economically. Insofar as privilege was preserved, and even reinforced, so was inequality. Marginson uses several indicators to demonstrate that inequalities between schools have in fact widened over the decade, and suggests that:

> . . . the Karmel period has in the end produced a downgrading of concern with equality in education, and widespread commitment to upward individual mobility through private education *at the exepnse of others* instead of social improvement through public education *in conjunction with all.*
>
> (Marginson 1983)

Whether this was a consequence of Schools Commission planning or the 'new dogmatism' of the Fraser Government (Dwyer *et al.*, 1984), is not explored. However, apart from the economic and structural difficulties in the programs to achieve equality, Johnston (1983) has drawn attention to a number of ambiguities and contradictions in the philosophical and educational rhetoric used to advance the principle of equality. In characterising it as part of a 'social democratic discourse', he describes the ambiguities and tensions as necessary, in order to achieve the broad consensus which the Whitlam government wanted so that educational debate could be removed from the political arena.

> On the political level, the success of social democratic discourse is precisely that it has embedded within it the potential for different interpretations because, without this ambiguity, important groups and interests would be excluded from the alliance, and the uneasy unity would be emperilled.
>
> (Johnston 1983, p.22)

Insofar as this position implied a failure to confront the inevitable conflict of interests between the 'disadvantaged' and the 'privileged', it was unlikely to be adequate as a basis for challenging the perpetuation of inequalities.

On the basis of a detailed analysis of the argumentation presented in the Karmel Report, and its elaboration in subsequent Triennium reports, Johnston has identified four logics of equality in the views of the Commission. From the outset, the Karmel Report rejected the view that equality was simply a matter of access to specified circumstances of schooling and established the need for a different conception of equality. In that report, three logics were apparent:

(a) the compensatory logic. According to this logic, certain groups and schools should receive a greater than average share of public resources to enable them to overcome the disadvantaged circumstances of the families, neighbourhoods, and schools. Johnston notes that in these terms, the notion of equality is scarcely an advance, as the problem is still one of producing optimum mobility in a competitive individualistic market society;

(b) the equality of respect logic. In this logic, it is suggested that schooling should be satisfying in itself, with a stress on 'an equal valuing of people based on their common humanity'. There was a clear conflict between this and the compensatory logic, thus producing a major source of ambiguity in the pursuit of equality;

(c) the pluralist versus mainstream culture logic. The third logic suggested that while sub-cultures in Australia are distinct, with distinct needs, some children experience a culture of poverty. The schools must ensure that they obtain the fundamental skills with which to break out of the cycle. This logic highlighted directly the tension between respect for diversity and emphasis on competition in the mainstream society.

The lack of clarity in the objectives of equality espoused by the Commission enabled people with quite divergent views to argue that their approach was justified within the terms of the Karmel Report. This continued through each of the Reports until 1981.

> Some of the logics used by the Karmel Committee continue to appear, some drop out only to appear later in new conceptual clothes, and some new logics make their appearance and become increasingly elaborated.
>
> (Johnson 1983, p.24)

The fourth logic, which appeared firstly in the Triennium Report for 1976-8, is the power-over-circumstances logic. Initially couched in individualistic terms, this logic emphasised the importance of schools in enabling students to develop their own talents and capacity to shape their lives while participating effectiely in society. Only in 1981 was this logic slightly redefined to underline the importance of *collective* action for people to exercise genuine power over their circumstances. More than any of the other logics, this provides the strongest impetus towards action that would involve radical change, not just within schooling, but within the society as a whole.

> Power over circumstances means participating with others to change the circumstances that block the aspiractions and hopes of identifiable social groups, whether the group identity be based on class, ethnicity or gender!
>
> (Johnston 1983, p.26)

Even here there was ambiguity about the extent to which the competitive labour market, and the corresponding hierarchical and exploitative labour process, was considered to be the target of change. When linked with the resource constraints and contradictions discussed by Marginson, it is not surprising that the research evidence indicates that little progress has been made towards greater educational equality, let alone signficant change in the social structure of inequality.

Nevertheless, programs to redress inequalities in terms of social class background, gender and ethnicity have had considerable impact on schools over the last decade, especially those schools in working-class neighbourhoods. These programs have been a significant, generally pleasant influence on the context of schooling for working-class children. An outline of the major programs is necessary as a basis for exploring the theoretical assumptions implicit within them.

(a) Disadvantaged Schools Program

In its *Report for the 1976-8 Triennium*, the Schools Commission outlined the basis of the Disadvantaged Schools Program:

> The particular target is relative poverty and its educational implications. Within a tradition of equal resource allocation, a situation had arisen where the public schools serving the most socially deprived neighbourhoods were in general those least well provided for physically, those least attractive to teachers and those most accepting of educational failure in children.
> (Schools Commission 1975, p.161)

The focus of the program was on bringing about changes in the facilities *and* the curriculum of schools so that schooling would become more 'relevant', enjoyable and effective for students in neighbourhoods in which the predominant experience had been economic hardship and political powerlessness. Particular schools thoughout Australia were designated as 'disadvantaged' according to a complicated forumula based on socioeconomic data. Capital and recurrent funds were then provided to these schools for specific projects.

In all States, but especially in Victoria, there has been an emphasis on the involvement of parents on the grounds that the students from poor and ethnic families have gone to schools in which they were subject to curricula which were incompatible with their needs. Hence, there has been a priority placed on school-based development of curriculum, such that teachers and parents (and more recently, students) should co-operate in deciding school policy and in planning particular learning experiences.

However, the ambiguity and tension inherent in the Schools Commission's thinking about equality has been reflected in confusion and contradiction in the implementation of the Program at the local level. In the first place, although projects have been initiated and planned at a school level, decisions about overall policy and funding were made within a framework which was hierarchical and bureaucratic in form. This led to confusion not only about the aims for specific school projects, but also about how decisions on funding should be made. A recent evaluation of the program in Victoria (Malcolm 1983) suggests the following result:

(a) at national and state level, the two main contending logics of equality have been reverse discrimination (all children should enter a competitive society from the same line), and schools should change (greater continuity would enhance students' capacity to exercise power over life circumstances);
(b) at school level, the logic is that additional resources and parental involvement will lead to curriculum improvement, and the provision of 'enrichment' experiences for disadvantaged children.

It is hardly surprising that the Disadvantaged Schools Program has not had a major impact on improving educational equality, given the difficulties in implementation and the relative shortage of resources in comparison to those allocated to private schools. Furthermore, in the absence of other changes in schooling, particularly in credentialling and in the relationship between schools and the labour market, it is inevitable that the social outcomes of schooling would depend on measures of *individual* achievements.

(b) Equal Opportunity

The comparative educational disadvantage suffered by girls was first documented in the Schools Commission Report on *Girls, Schools and Society* (1975). Concern to intervene in the process whereby girls become dis-

advantaged in the outcomes of schooling compared with their male counterparts has led to the establishment of programs in schools aimed at providing equality for both boys and girls.[3] While there have been variations in approach, all programs have reflected the view that it is necessary to acknowledge the disadvantage suffered by girls and to right the imbalance 'by providing for *equal* education experiences for both sexes' (Equal Opportunity Unit 1983). In practice, this has come to mean that the crucial areas for change have been those associated with the stereotyping of 'sex roles', in particular those which have the effect of restricting choices for students, especially girls. One result of this has been the encouragement for girls to take up apprenticeships in traditionally male areas. Another development has been the growth of studies on the contribution of women in public life, while other programs focus on improving the self-esteem and assertiveness of girls.

There are however, a number of dilemmas with each of these approaches. Firstly, the notion of sex roles assumes that the ideas and priorities of young people are imposed upon them, without choice or contradiction. It has been our experience that many young people choose to act in particular ways, with some awareness of the conflicts and contradictions that these choices may imply. The decision made by some of the girls to place a high priority on the relationships involved in parenting rather than the pursuit of a career has a complex basis from their point of view. Hence, it seems that the decisions they make are a result of positive action and thought on their part, and not of simple programming into a stereotyped sex role.

More importantly, the complexity in the view of students suggests that the concept of equal opportunity itself is limited in three ways. The first is that, in practice, 'equality' comes to mean 'similarity' between boys and girls. Because the problem of inequality is seen as one of girls being disadvantaged, boys' experiences and outcomes are seen as the yardstick against which the outcomes of all students are measured. This has the effect that the aims of equality of opportunity programs are to make girls' experiences more like those of boys, giving greater encouragement for girls to have the prerequisites (such as maths and science) for entering traditional male occupations. This approach denies the validity of the perspectives that girls contribute and seriously underestimates the strength of their views. The approach accepts the current hierarchical, exploitative, competitive structure of the labour process and ignores the fact that despite the financial disadvantages they suffer, women consistently reject that mode of livelihood in favour of alternatives.

Further, although some programs in schools address the issue of livelihood and participation in the adult world in terms of paid employment, they ignore the relationship this may have with child rearing and domestic labour. Rosita Larkin comments that the notion that girls and boys should be the same stifles the education of girls. This tenacious view fails to acknowledge the profound impact that gender has on how women are perceived by others and how we preceive ourselves' (1983, p.12). She adds that in this way the oppression of grils is reinforced and their insights and perceptions are lost in the school milieu.

The third limitation on the notion of equal opportunity is that as a strategy it cannot of itself product equality of outcomes. Because of the structure and practices of the labour market and of the choices and decisions young people themselves make, equality of experience in school may be followed by inequality in the search for paid employment. The basic limita-

tion of the equality of opportunity approach is that with regard to both gender and class,

> by locating the source of inequality at the point of the acquisition of skills and attitudes it fails to recognise the political character of the social relations within which they are acquired; so it leaves unexamined and unchallenged the social/economic institutions which maintain and perpetuate those social relations.
>
> (Franzway & Lowe 1978, p.15)

(c) Multiculturalism

Since 1970 there have been a number of programs aimed at improving the educational outcomes of migrant children. Commonwealth funds were initially provided specifically for the teaching of English. In 1976, under the influence of the Schools Commission, the focus was broadened to include bilingual programs, changes in school organisation more appropriate for students from non-English speaking backgrounds, and a broad emphasis on involving all students in multicultural programs. The overall intent of the programs has been to provide, on the one hand, some recognition of the diversity of ethnic groups and cultural traditions, whilst also ensuring, on the other, that there was some access to the 'common' or 'mainstream' culture, albeit through a range of approaches. Consequently, schools have been encouraged to recognise the diversity of the actual cultural backgrounds of their students and to adopt practices, including language teaching, and outlooks which support the self-esteem and confidence of students.

Following the Galbally Report (1978), the Commonwealth government restructured the existing funding into two new programs, a Migrant Education program which was to assist in improving the English-language usage of migrant students, and the Multicultural Education program, which was to support activities for all students in order to promote the development of a 'multicultural' society. The latter program has contributed to the rapid expansion of opportunities for learning 'community languages', and to the provision of limited Commonwealth funds for ethnic schools, where such schools would have an open enrolment policy.

There are some significant limitations in how these programs have been conceived and implemented. In the first place, it is still assumed that they exist primarily for the 'ethnics'. There is still only a small amount of activity that is oriented towards the dominant Anglo-Saxon sector of the population. There is little questioning of the significance of Anglo-Saxon culture in establishing certain social practices or achievements as the criteria for success. Although there has been an emphasis on moving towards a culturally pluralist society, this has been interpreted in terms of superficial characteristics of culture such as food, dance, clothing and perhaps the recognition of special rituals. Hence relatively few examples of multicultural curricula have examined closely the cultural implications of the circumstances of employment to which many migrants have had to adjust. Consequently, many migrant children are denied the opportunity to examine in school the experiences which many of their parents have had in the debilitating conditions of Australian factories.

(d) School-to-Work Transition

This program was introduced on a somewhat different basis than the programs mentioned previously. In the first place, funding was guaranteed for

a specific period of five years; furthermore, it was not based on a principle of redressing inequality, but as an expedient measure to relieve some of the pressures mounting in the youth labour market. The policy was announced jointly in November 1979 by the Ministers for Education, and Employment and Youth Affairs, with a commitment of funding for the period from 1980-4. In announcing the policy, the Ministers quite clearly implied that inadequate schooling was responsible for the poor outcomes in the labour market faced by many school-leavers.

> Our primary concern is with the 50,000 young people who now leave school each year with poor employment prospects. We wish to provide appropriate education and training courses for them and also tackle the problem of those in school who are likely to be in similar difficulties when it comes to their turn to leave.
>
> (Statement by Senator Carrick, Minister for Education, November 1979)

The policy had clear equality implications, insofar as it was directed primarily at those young people who left school early, without recognised credentials and hence with the poorest educational outcomes.

In the confusion of ideas and debate which surrounded the introduction of this program, quite different approaches were adopted in the allocation of funds to particular projects. Some projects were based on the assumption that individual students were at fault in one respect or another, and that specific remediation was necessary to prepare those people for the labour market. In others the assumption was that schooling should be based on pedagogic principles which would enable all students to obtain the social awareness and technical competence necessary to respond to the demands of social change, not simply those who obtained credentials.

Inequality programs: Some conclusions

There can be little doubt that each of these programs has contributed to significant innovations in schooling in Australia, and that the general understanding and debate about inequality has become more sophisticated. Many schools, especially those in working-class neighbourhoods, are now more interesting and comfortable places than they were a decade ago, and the quality and range of educational activities has improved significantly. However, little impact has been made as yet on the distribution of educational outcomes, and the structure of inequality in Australian society. Even allowing for the view that significant change in such deeply entrenched aspects of a society may take generations, there is little evidence to suggest that the existing programs will be effective. Economic and political developments in the last decade have, if anything, exacerbated the inequality of educational outcomes, as the costs of failure by students have taken on even greater significance. Girls now have a higher retention rate to year 12 in Victoria than boys, and some have obtained jobs in non-traditional areas, and yet unemployment rates amongst young women continue to be significantly higher than those for young men. As Richard Sweet (1981) has put it, the labour market for teenage girls is now a fully fledged disaster area.

In this section, we have been concerned to demonstrate the problems that have existed in the conception of 'equality', and in the approaches to achieving it. Nevertheless, the programs discussed here have helped to set the context in which young people, particularly those in working-class neighbourhoods, now experience schooling. In a society in which the costs

of inequality (denial of a livelihood) are rapidly rising, it is more important than ever to develop a perspective on social division and inequality that will be effective in promoting programs for positive action, to ensure that all young people have the right to an adequate livelihood, irrespective of social differences. The school experiences and views of young people constitute a necessary basis for the development of such a perspective.

Research findings on class, gender and ethnicity

Our participation in a number of recent projects in schools in working-class neighbourhoods has provided opportunities for us to listen to young people's accounts of their experiences and perspectives. Several themes appeared repeatedly in these accounts, related to questions about the interaction of class, gender and ethnicity in the production of unequal outcomes.

There are particular difficulties in reporting briefly yet systematically on the findings of different projects that have used qualitative methods. We have chosen here to present 'case studies' of two of the young people we interviewed, to illustrate these themes. We have chosen Helen* and Flavco* because what they say is in one sense typical of the kinds of perspectives of many of the young people to whom we spoke. They express their ideas more clearly than many of their contemporaries, but their views epitomize the kinds of concerns, conflicts and priorities that we found recurring in our discussions with young people from each of the three projects on which this paper is based. Using case studies to convey our material enables us to present something of the complexity and ambiguity as well as the broad themes.

*Helen and Flavco are fictitious names.

(a) Case studies

At the time of the interviews, Helen was a year 10 student at an inner-city school in Melbourne. Her parents were both born in Australia. Her mother was not employed and her dad had worked for most of his life as a wharfie and had now retired. She has four older brothers, three of whom were unemployed. Her mother wanted her to stay at school so that Helen could earn the credentials (HSC) to give her a chance of getting a good job.

> I suppose my mum places a lot of pressure on me to stay at school and do well. She always wants me to do better than she did. You see, when she was 14 she had to leave school as her mum didn't have the money to keep her there because of her Dad, all his money went on alcohol and none towards the family. I guess a lot to do with it was that she only ever worked in factories and she thinks that I should have all the chances to do better. I guess she's placing all her hopes on me too, 'coe I'm the youngest and the only girl and of course three of my four brothers are on the dole.

Helen had clearly rejected the idea of staying at schools. She would have liked to leave school and get a job and emphasised that her attitude was partly a result of the teaching at school, where there was 'no freedom, no trust, no nothing.' She would consider staying at school if she could transfer to another local school at which she believed students had 'your own choice and hours and better feeling'. Helen's form of resistance to school involved the rather passive strategy of simply not working. Paradoxically, her older brothers' experiences of unemployment have not encouraged her to try harder at school. Rather, their experience has confirmed in her mind

the lack of relevance of schooling for getting a job. Rather than trying harder, she said:

> I try less. I look at it—the better I do, the longer I have to stay. You see, I 'spose its like this—the more you're at school really with most people, the less you like it. So the further you go, the more you get turned off. My parents think that the longer I'm here the less I'm on the streets, but they know that my brother he did form 6 and then he did some uni. and still he hasn't got a job—so I don't think it's any different.

Helen would have liked to be a social worker if she had a choice: 'somebody who helps people'. Although she realised that she would need a tertiary education to train her to be a social worker, Helen refused to put in the necessary effort into succeeding academically at school. When questioned about this, she was adament about her reasons:

> Too much school—got to do HSC, go to do Uni, it's too much, by the time you get there you'd be 25 or something—who wants to do that—study for another 5 years. Who's to say you're going to get through? I mean, I'm nothing out of the ordinary. I'm no brain. I'm rapt to say that. I don't want people looking at me saying 'ooh, look she works'. I'm not going to be a dud—cos if you're smart you have no friends.

When asked if she thought it was more important to have friends, Helen said with absolute conviction:

> I reckon no book's going to help you when you need help—friends will—books don't.

Finally, when asked what work she thought she would end up doing in reality Helen said:

> Working in a shop or factory, nothing out of the ordinary. I don't want to be nothing special. I want to be like everyone else.

Helen was consciously making choices which she knew would affect her future. Despite the fact that her parents and her teachers wanted her to stay at school, Helen had chosen a course that would disadvantage her considerably in the labour market. Althogh she put a high priority on getting a job, her decision to leave school at the end of year 10 had made it difficult for her to obtain paid employment. By June 1983 Helen had left home and was unemployed.

The point to be made is that Helen's reasons for the decisions reflect positive values. Firstly, Helen has a clear commitment to the relationships she has with her friends. This is not just related to 'peer group pressure'. In her experience, she has seen that friends are more important than books, and she is not prepared to place herself in a competitive situation with her friends and be seen as 'a dud'. On the other hand, her relationship with teachers was disappointing. She commented on the lack of 'trust' between teachers and students. For Helen her sense of solidarity with her fellow students made the competitive academic requirements of schooling unacceptable.

She would like to be doing something more 'relevant', in terms of identity, being in the student 'role' is a waste of time. She would really like to have access to adult status by having a job. While still at school Helen mused that if she left school, she woud:

> Go straight down to the CES, get a job, work for two weeks, get a bond, get a flat, then I'd be set for the rest of my life . . . I would . . .

Compared with the academic knowledge transmitted through the school, learning about life through experience, through real situations, was a much more attractive option, even though she realised that even the steps she had outlined here may be difficult to achieve.

Other positive values emerged in Helen's dicussion of her options, especially concerning her identity as a young women. Like most young women, the jobs she wanted to do were related to 'helping people' or 'personal relationships'. For her work experience, Helen worked in a local creche, about which she spoke enthusiastically. She compared the pleasure of working in the creche with the drudgery of working a 'McDonald's' for holiday jobs. However, apart from getting a job, like many young women, Helen saw raising a child and entering a relationship with another person as an important part of her future as a female. She said:

> I'd like to get married actually, because I really wanted to have a baby when I turned 16.

The real priority was on having a child—entering a (dependent) relationship with a male was seen as a necessary corollary. She was not at all romantic about 'marriage'.

> Actually, I'm not really for marriage. I'm more for de facto. You can stay when you want and go when you want. You understand each other.

Given this priority, it is easy to see why Helen was aghast at the prospect of having to study until she is 25 to get the job of her choice. Further, the ideology of 'equal opportunity' only served to invalidate her own views, in a situation where she already felt quite undermined.

This choice on Helen's part may be seen as narrowing her options. To her, a job, a flat and motherhood were aspects of adult status, which she would like to achieve. The fact that being a mother and being employed may be contradictory occupations is something that she could only contemplate by assuming that she will be in a dependent relationship with a (hopefully) wage-earning male.

Flavco, who was in the same class as Helen, has parents who were born in Yugoslavia. His mother worked in a factory and his dad was looking for work after his factory was closed down. Like Helen, Flavco wanted to leave school. His main priority was to get a job and he saw school largely as a preparation for that ambition. Hence, much of what happened in school seemed irrelevant to him. Flavco's reaction to this was also one of passive resistance.

> . . . if you find the work boring you decide to go out and have a smoke.

Flavco had made considerable effort to get himself a job, without much success. He knew that there were:

> Not enough jobs around—like everywhere you go for an apprenticeship they're all filled up. Like a few years back you could have only done form 1 and you would have got an apprenticeship like that. These years you could have done form 6 and everything and you still can't get a job.

He saw some irony in the fact that both he and his father were looking for jobs. Flavco explained to us that because his parents were Yugoslav they, 'like the Greeks', had high expectations for him and wanted him to stay at school. He understood their point of view but was more influenced by the

experiences of his peers and his perceptions of the local job market and had more or less convinced his parents that if he could find a job he would leave school.

Flavco's attitude to getting a job was ambiguous. He saw getting a job as being crucial to adult life. When asked what was the most important thing to him, he said:

> Life—life and job. if you haven't got money you haven't got a life to lead 'cos you need clothes, you need food, you need to pay bills for your house and that, so you need quite a bit of money.

Flavco was anticipating himself as an adult who had responsibilities to provide basic resources. In this sense, he was to be the breadwinner of a family, with dependents. His concept of adulthood was unambiguously masculine. On the other hand, he was not very romantic about the world of work. He believed that people:

> . . . don't work because they like it. They work for the money, without work how are you going to get the money—pension won't be enough or the dole not enough—they have to work not because they like it; for the cash.

In the short term, Flavco and his friends would work for a car, 'the monaro'. This reflects a very different orientation from those of the girls. Their aims for working were more directed towards the 'private', the 'domestic' of setting up a house or flat rather than a car, which provides for participation in the public sphere.

What is particularly striking in these cases and in what other young people had to say to us, is that, regardless of the attempts by policy-makers to intervene through programs aimed at redressing inequalities, these young people will continue to establish their futures in terms that make sense to themselves. More importantly, the way they make sense of their experience is not haphazard or random, but is based on certain traditions (which we call cultural perspectives). This process is not as easily amenable to 'attitude' change as is often assumed by those working, for example, from a perspective of 'sex-role stereotyping', or 'motivation theory'.

Particular themes do emerge in the interpretation of their experiences which young people present. There are three in particular which we would like to discuss here.

(b) Complexity

When asked about their attitudes to the future, young people express a variety of distinctive ideas based on their different insights, values and experiences. Many express views which are complex and reveal ambivalent feelings about school and work. Understanding the situation of these young people requires not only a recognition of the patterns and implicit connections in their individual responses, but also the diversity and contradictions in their views.

The analysis of essentially qualitative material requires careful attention. While subjective interpretation is a characteristic of most forms of social research, we are especially aware of the potential for selectivity in presenting material from unstructured interviews. Hence, the recognition of the complexities of the views of young people, the ambiguities in their understandings and the contradictions they express provides a useful guard against the construction of a simplistic picture of their perspectives.

Furthermore, although our analysis of young people's statements is assisted by the approach discussed in the following section, we emphasise that a clear understanding of the issues depends on a recognition of the context in which people are living. Local and historical conditions can produce what seem like anomalies in class, gender and ethnic relations, which need to be considered. For example, Valerie Walkerdine (1981) argues that while certain beliefs and actions of young people in school may be read as expressions of resistance, they may at times have 'reactionary' rather than 'revolutionary' effects. Relations of power and resistance are developed in a process of constant struggle and redefinition.

Another source of anomalies lies in the experience of older siblings which affect the context in which young siblings grow up. For example, we found in several cases that young people valued education highly, and yet were reluctant to commit themselves to further education because they had older siblings who were unemployed graduates of tertiary institutions. To the younger sisters and brothers, this seemed a 'waste of time'.

(c) Class and cultural perspectives

Throughout our research certain patterns consistently emerged in the perspectives of the young people. They reflected a similarity of views which resulted from common experiences at school, in the workplace, and from the experiences conveyed by their parents and older siblings. Other work on cultural formation in Australia (Dwyer *et al.*, 1984) suggests that the strength and character of these views can be linked to the persistence of distinctive cultural perspectives amongst working-class people in Australia. These perspectives help to provide a sense of belonging for young people in working-class neighbourhoods, and a framework of values which mediate their hopes for the future and their relationships with other people. While some elements of this dimension of cultural formation may be linked with those of other sections of society, a distinctive aspect of working-class cultural perspectives emerges from the awareness of conflict between groups with different interests.

The distinctiveness of these perspectives is related to the kinds of experiences people have as they go about their daily life, and consequently are influenced by the conditions under which people live, are employed and the relationships they have with family and friends. Although there still persists a myth about the dominance of a 'middle class' in Australian society, an examination of people's working conditions suggests that in terms of security of employment, skills required by the job, opportunities for advancement, and autonomy, a majority of the Australian workforce in engaged in employment which inevitably leads to a conflict with management, whether in the private or public sphere. In times of economic recession, the nature of industrial conflict becomes more apparent.

Other recent Australian work on class culture in Australia (Connell 1977, Chamberlain 1983), has provided a basis for identifying the elements of a dominant or ruling-class culture in Australia. Dwyer et al. have suggested that this is not simply accepted by working-class people, but rather is interpreted in specific ways according to their experience. Specifically, working-class people establish a sense of legitimacy for themselves within Australian society in a way which reflects a class conflict based on comparatively distinct sets of experiences, which generate different interpretations of human society, and divergent approaches to social interaction. In linking the concept of culture with class, we suggest that the framework

experiences of his peers and his perceptions of the local job market and had more or less convinced his parents that if he could find a job he would leave school.

Flavco's attitude to getting a job was ambiguous. He saw getting a job as being crucial to adult life. When asked what was the most important thing to him, he said:

> Life—life and job. if you haven't got money you haven't got a life to lead 'cos you need clothes, you need food, you need to pay bills for your house and that, so you need quite a bit of money.

Flavco was anticipating himself as an adult who had responsibilities to provide basic resources. In this sense, he was to be the breadwinner of a family, with dependents. His concept of adulthood was unambiguously masculine. On the other hand, he was not very romantic about the world of work. He believed that people:

> . . . don't work because they like it. They work for the money, without work how are you going to get the money—pension won't be enough or the dole not enough—they have to work not because they like it; for the cash.

In the short term, Flavco and his friends would work for a car, 'the monaro'. This reflects a very different orientation from those of the girls. Their aims for working were more directed towards the 'private', the 'domestic' of setting up a house or flat rather than a car, which provides for participation in the public sphere.

What is particularly striking in these cases and in what other young people had to say to us, is that, regardless of the attempts by policy-makers to intervene through programs aimed at redressing inequalities, these young people will continue to establish their futures in terms that make sense to themselves. More importantly, the way they make sense of their experience is not haphazard or random, but is based on certain traditions (which we call cultural perspectives). This process is not as easily amenable to 'attitude' change as is often assumed by those working, for example, from a perspective of 'sex-role stereotyping', or 'motivation theory'.

Particular themes do emerge in the interpretation of their experiences which young people present. There are three in particular which we would like to discuss here.

(b) Complexity

When asked about their attitudes to the future, young people express a variety of distinctive ideas based on their different insights, values and experiences. Many express views which are complex and reveal ambivalent feelings about school and work. Understanding the situation of these young people requires not only a recognition of the patterns and implicit connections in their individual responses, but also the diversity and contradictions in their views.

The analysis of essentially qualitative material requires careful attention. While subjective interpretation is a characteristic of most forms of social research, we are especially aware of the potential for selectivity in presenting material from unstructured interviews. Hence, the recognition of the complexities of the views of young people, the ambiguities in their understandings and the contradictions they express provides a useful guard against the construction of a simplistic picture of their perspectives.

Furthermore, although our analysis of young people's statements is assisted by the approach discussed in the following section, we emphasise that a clear understanding of the issues depends on a recognition of the context in which people are living. Local and historical conditions can produce what seem like anomalies in class, gender and ethnic relations, which need to be considered. For example, Valerie Walkerdine (1981) argues that while certain beliefs and actions of young people in school may be read as expressions of resistance, they may at times have 'reactionary' rather than 'revolutionary' effects. Relations of power and resistance are developed in a process of constant struggle and redefinition.

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of shared meanings, standards, expectations and motives which provides the context for the interpretation of experience by working-class people is qualitatively different from and distinct from that of the dominant culture. These cultural perspectives develop in dialectical relation to the dominant images, and are subject to fragmentation from ethnic diversity, gender conflict and social mobility, reflecting also the influence of local and historical circumstances. Social researchers have tended to use the concepts of class, gender and ethnicity to make sense of what people do as if these were all experienced in isolation from each other. Our evidence supports the view that in everyday life these interconnect in complex ways, and cannot be understood as separate aspects of experience. There are several points about the interrelationship of class, gender and ethnicity that arise from our research.

(d) Class, gender and ethnicity

Firstly, the rational approach suggested by Connell et al. (1982), and Game and Pringle (1982) with regard to gender and class is particlarly useful in understanding the construction of personal identity: young females construct their notion of what it is to be 'feminine' against a notion of masculinity in relation to femininity. We reported in an earlier paper (Wilson & Wyn 1982) that many of our interviewees were quite emphatic about what constituted masculine or feminine behaviour, particularly with regard to ways of gaining a livelihood. Many young people presumed that there was a close link between particular jobs and a specific gender: earning the main wage (in the public sphere) for the family *was* masculine behaviour, and staying at home (the private sphere) with the major responsibility for childrearing was more or less a definition of feminine behaviour. Central to this was the assumption that the female would be dependent on the male for her livelihood.

In several ways, they view of relationships was clearly different from the expectations that are part of 'dominant culture' as expressed in formal institutions such as schools. For example, despite the orientation of the schools to involve the students first and foremost in the competitive academic curriculum, many consistently resisted this, placing a higher priority on their friendships and being supportive to each other in the face of what they saw as hostile staff. In talking about their own priorities, it was clear that they had an awareness of the difference between their own priorities, it was clear that they had an awareness of the difference between their own perspectives and experiences and those that the school tended to emphasise, and in discussing their priorities would frequently clarify their own perspective by pointing to the difference. One student outlined the reasons why he might not succeed academically.:

> It's just that I was brought up different to some other kids you know. Some kids go to private school and that, but me, I'm in with these guys here—it's pretty hard. You gotta sort of . . . they're not the kids that will sit down and work all day, they'll work—but they won't *work*, that's it.

Secondly, the statements of the non-Anglo-Saxon students indicate that while they are aware of their differing ethnicity, the experience of growing up in a working-class neighbourhood in Melbourne provides them with views that are not very different from each other—despite the range of ethnic backgrounds. Students were often at pains to point out to us they come from a 'Yugoslav' or 'Greek' background, and that this affected their par-

ents' expectations of them for the future. However, they were also able to elaborate on why they opposed their parents' view, outlining their perceptions of the local labour market, based on the experiences of their peers and older siblings. This suggests that class relations are much more significant than ethnicity when it comes to questions of livelihood. It seems however that this may be more so for boys than for girls. In some cases we found young women from non-Anglo-Australian backgrounds reporting that their parents' expectations that they become teachers or study law were too high for them; in others, it was clear that despite their hopes of gaining a tertiary education their parents would not contemplate supporting them in education further than year 10 or 11, because they were females.

In addition, it was more common for young women from non Anglo-Australian households to carry considerable domestic responsibility and for their participation in the public sphere to be curtailed. While the focusing of their experience in the 'private' sphere has serious implications for the young women involved, the outcomes are not substantially different than for their Anglo-Saxon sisters. That is, even given what seems to be more 'freedom' we have found that young women predominantly define their futures in terms of a marginal or ambivalent relation to the 'public' world of wage-earning, with a considerable commitment to the 'private' world of child rearing and domestic labour. While most working-class girls did aim to get a job, they tended to put it in the context of 'working until I have a family', or 'to set up the house'. Furthermore, the young women in our sample overwhelmingly hoped to work in jobs that were ostensibly to do with human relationships (such as social work, child care or nursing). Where the connection was not so clear, they stressed that getting to meet people would be one of the positive features of the job - even with hairdressing or working in McDonald's. Those features of some ethnic cultures that seem to be particularly 'patriarchal' (including the rigid distinction between public and private) are, in many respects, simply a difference of degree, not of kind, from dominant social perspectives and practices.

New directions

Making sense of the issues and perspectives presented by young working-class people has been assisted by the recent thinking of Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett (*Making the Difference*) and Game and Pringle (*Gender at Work*). In both of these books, the authors begin to acknowledge the complexity of class and gender analysis and insist on an approach which emphasises the processes within which social relations are constructed. In particular, by taking people's perspectives and experiences seriously, they challenge the rather simplistic (though prevalent) view that most people are uncritically socialised into a 'role'. This implies a critique of explanations of social behaviour that rely on the notion of 'sex-role socialisation' or on the all-pervasiveness of a 'dominant culture'. Rather, they suggest there are other, more complex issues involved in the processes creating and perpetuating inequality in Australian society, recognising that people make positive choices which leave them vulnerable. This approach links the issues of class and gender at a broad level, with specific situations in schools or in factories.

Secondly, both works imply a relational approach to the concepts of gender and class. Although neither deals in sufficient detail with this, both argue that gender and class are closely related in people's daily experience.

Their findings suggest that the tendency of social researchers and policy makers to discuss gender and class as though they were separate is unrealistic. For example, Game and Pringle argue that masculinity and femininity are socially constructed in *relation* to each other. They stress that 'gender is not just about difference but about power. The domination of men and the subordination of women'. For them, the power relation is maintained by a division of labour in which a distinction is maintained between men's and women's work. Through their case studies, Game and Pringle reveal the ways in which gender relations and class relations shape each other in the work place.

Similarly, from their discussions with young people and their parents, Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett found that people's experience of class and gender relations is constantly intertwined. They also argue that both class and gender relations are structures of power which contain tension and contradiction and are subject to change. More specifically, they discuss how the construction of masculinity and femininity takes place within the constraints of class relations and how at the same time people's experience of class is mediated by their gender.

In all our work, the young people concerned have emphasised the priority that 'getting a job' or how they might otherwise obtain a livelihood, has for them. Some analysis of the importance of livelihood is required in order to grasp the effects of social division on how the young working class, male and female, approach the future.

The importance of livelihood

Both young males and females express a strong concern to assume what they see as adult positions in society. A central aspect of this concern is the issue of livelihood. Firstly, it seems that their concern for a livelihood is crucial in their hopes to achieve legitimacy as adult members of society. The concept of livelihood encompasses both a means to a particular way of living and of relating to other people. For the young males in our study this meant that wage-labour was the central prospect for obtaining the resources for livelihood. The wage was seen as the means of obtaining a particular standard of material well-being for themselves and possibly for other dependents. More than this, exercising their labour power in paid employment was also seen as a way of using time; a way of contributing that was clearly productive. For males and females, contribution to production in this way was bound up with establishing a sense of dignity as members of society. Many of the young people acknowledged the contradiction between this attitude to 'work' and the reality of working in factories, in which the conditions of work would constantly assault their dignity. The struggle needed to maintain some dignity was apparent in their parents' advice to avoid factory work and to get a 'good job' with 'good conditions'.[4]

While getting a job and earning a wage was an important aspect of their hopes for the future, many young women also revealed an expectation that if they had children, they would be dependent on a relationship with a male for their livelihood. Earning a wage conferred adult status on them in one way, but motherhood was also seen by many as being central to adult female practices. While this has the disadvantage for women of placing them in a dependent relationship economically, it does have the positive effect of giving them access to legitimate adult status through a means not mediated by the labour market.

The formation of views on livelihood and its practice does not occur as a neutral process. Young people grow up in a society which may be characterised as both patriarchal and capitalist.[5] This has several implications: firstly, a significant aspect of the development of capitalism has been an apparent separation of interests between the political and economic. Hence, the formal political structure of the state is seen to be concerned with government, in supposed contrast to the interests of capitalist business enterprises. This ideological separation of the political and economic is crucial to enabling ruling class interests to resist people's claims to the right of subsistence as the basis of a livelihood. With an increasing denial of employment opportunities because of increasing structural unemployment, the struggle for the right to subsistence is heightened (Piven & Cloward 1982).

Secondly, these young people are also growing up in a patriarchal society, in which there is an apparent separation between public and private experience. The public world is one in which males operate more comfortably than women, the private realm is one which women are seen to inhabit less ambiguously than men. This separation between public and private is of particular interest to feminists because of the way it reflects male experience rather than female, and Game and Pringle argue:

> The experience of the production/consumption, public/private splits is qualitatively different for men and women. These separations in life really only fit male experience, they are structured for the convenience of men. For women the situation is contradictory. Women in the paid workforce whom we have interviewed do not primarily identify as wives, mothers or consumption workers, nor do many experience their paid work as a simple extension of their unpaid work.
>
> (Game & Pringle 1983, p. 16)

We would suggest that the ideological split between private and public operates to deny a sense of belonging or integrity. With the assumption that 'the domestic' (i.e. childrearing and home work), is the realm of women, males may participate in society as adults only through wage earning. The denial to many males of the right to a wage (through unemployment) may in this sense consistute a 'crisis of masculinity'. In this circumstance, the lines that are conventionally drawn between 'public' and 'private' become more blurred. Amongst our interviewees many of their mothers were involved in paid employment, especially where their husbands were unemployed, making the distinction between public and private for both men and women even more contradictory.

The young people to whom we spoke approach adulthood in the context of these distinctions and struggles and their views provide some insight into these concerns. Their approach to livelihood is shaped by interpretations of their experiences which reflect both their class background and their negotiation of gender. We have found that while ethnicity is important to these young people's identity, their priorities and relationships especially with regard to the question of livelihood reflect their particular experience of Australian society. Hencce, when it comes to livelihood, we have found that young people's views are strongly influenced by the work of their parents and by the work experiences of older friends and siblings; this seems to be more closely linked with class experience than with ethnicity. While the supposed distinction between the public and domestic worlds for boys and girls may be more emphasised by particular ethnic groups, similar patterns appear amongst all groups.

The significance of ethnicity may become more apparent in considering the ambiguities implicit in achieving legitimacy in our society. This applies particularly for working-class people, who are aware of both an internal (working-class) standard for legitimate adult practices and an external (dominant cultural) standard. For people who have a distinctive cultural/ethnic identity, this is further complicated by the standards of legitimacy that derive from this perspective. The priority placed on material well-being and on earning money by the young people in our study reveals their awareness that a certain level of material well-being, including for example, a house of one's own, furnished to a certain standard, and a car, is necessary for legitimacy in the society. This is sometimes erroneously interpreted as indicating a narrow and 'materialistic' set of values. Our view is that the central issue revealed in such concerns is the priority of demonstrating that people have 'made it', not in terms of prestige, but of membership.

The formation and perpetuation of cultural perspectives, then, is a complex process and to understand it we need to be aware not only of specific local conditions, but also of the overall context of people's experience. It seems that many programs which seek to bring about change, seek to establish priorities that are appropriate only to the *public* sphere and to the competitive labour market. Equal opportunity programs are a good example of such programs in that they deny the validity of many young women's perspectives on establishing a sense of livelihood and adult practice through parenthood and instead give priority to what is essentially seen as a 'male' adult practice, wage labour alone.

For us, this discussion raises the important question of how we can address the question of livelihood in a way that recognises and is appropriate to the intrinsically positive concerns of young people like Helen and Flavco. As a young woman, Helen places a high value on her contribution outside of the public sphere of wage labour, while at the same time recognising the importance of having some involvement in this 'public' sphere, to establish a certain level of material security and comfort. Helen is aware of the importance of solidarity and places a high value on her friendships. Given the realities of life in capitalist, patriarchal society for working-class women, Helen and others like her prepare for their futures, in spite of the experience of formal schooling, rather than because of it. Similarly, Flavco is enthusiastic to take his place in adult society by contributing his labour power and by maintaining the positive relationships with other people that he has already established. He does not see the urgency with which he approaches paid employment as placing him in competition with his fellows; paid employment is central to his conception of himself as an adult.

Given the problem of long-term structural unemployment, it would seem appropriate to take the concept of 'equal opportunity' seriously and orient this towards a serious consideration in schools of how people live their adult lives in both the 'public' and 'private' spheres of labour (see, for example, Blackburn 1982). This would give greater validity to the perspectives of young women whose experiences and views tend to be marginalised by the current orientation to participation in the public sphere only, and would give a broader preparation for young males, whose participation in wage labour may be haphazard. This deliberate undermining of the distinction between public and private may provide a context for considering issues of livelihood in a way that could more closely approximately people's experience. In a time of social and economic crisis, these concerns are of particular significance.

Action in schools

We have been concerned in this paper with the effectiveness of the existing programs designed to achieve educational equality, hence enhancing social equality, and their implications for enabling young people to obtain a livelihood in the rapidly changing circumstances of Australian society. We believe that there are a number of implications of the line of thought developed in this paper for how educational programs, in schools or elsewhere, might be developed for 'disadvantaged' young people.

The most important outcome is that no educational program should be based on the assumption that young people (at secondary schools) are generally willing and open recipients of learning packages devised by educational policy-makers or even school-based committees. As has been found in other research projects (Wright et al. 1978, Schools Commission 1980), most young people to whom we have spoken have fairly well developed ideas about what they expect of school in a general sense *and* a well developed critique of their schooling. This is much more than a concern with 'activity-based' programs or instrumental learning; it is a set of concerns that involves:

(a) the quality of relationships established within the school, both among young people themselves and between teachers and students;
(b) an approach to decision-making that is essentially democratic, allowing anybody to be involved as they wish;
(c) the development of intellectual and practical skills in a context which engages with the experiences of students and enables them to see the relationship between school activities and 'real life';
(d) a priority on obtaining an adequate livelihood and being established and accepted as adult members of society.

There have been several statements about schooling in recent years (Schools Commission 1980, 1981), which offer a framework for organisations which, if implemented, would meet some at least of these concerns. In terms of curriculum or program planning, our research would suggest that the interests and concerns of young people, especially those in working-class schools and the circumstances under which they live, should be central. This implies a curriculum process in which the initial activities would be structured so as to enable students to articulate their concerns and to recognise that they will be taken seriously. Through an examination of the skills and content areas which are implicit within these initial concerns, a process would be established which extended the students' focus to broader areas of concern.

It is in this regard that a *relational* analysis of class and gender is particularly important. In the first place, it indicates the inadequacy of a curriculum or program which purports to deal with one dimension of students' experience and social position, without recognising or considering other aspects of that experience. Secondly, it draws attention to the conflict of interests that emerges from the social divisions within society, manifest even simply at the level of environmental differences between one neighbourhood and another, or in the apparent contrast between work and home. This raises the question of power and how it is that a structure of privilege and inequality has been produced and maintained. In the third place, a relational analysis shifts the focus from individual attainments or deficiencies to establishing a priority on collective circumstances and action. The concern with both inequality and livelihood goes well beyond the achievements of individuals; it is a question of how social structures and processes present-

ly advance the interests of particular groups of students, over and against others. Finally, a relational analysis helps to draw our attention to the contrasting practical and cultural strengths, as well as the weaknesses which different groups within the society possess. We would suggest that this is of direct relevance for schools in that the starting point for educational activities should be to enhance and develop the positive qualities and strengths which students bring, whilst at the same time seeking to expose and ameliorate those aspects which can be personally or culturally destructive.

An inevitable outcome of this approach to curriculum planning would be quite significant differences in the type of program developed with different groups of students. It would seem to us that this is an inevitable outcome of an educational process in which students' concerns are taken seriously and school-based decision making involving teachers, parents and students, is espoused. However, the objective of educational equality also requires that publicly funded education should enable all students to participate effectively in the broader political and economic spheres of the society.

This raises the question of *common outcomes*: What are the outcomes from schooling that *all* students should have achieved? This is not a new question, as it was implicit in the matters discussed in the Schools Commission Study on 15 and 16 year olds (Schools Commission). However, we would suggest that a focus on common outcomes for all students would centre attention much more directly on the issue of *social equality*, not simply educational equality. Clearly, the common outcomes would include some of the concerns already given a high priority within schooling: communication and technical skills, social and political awareness and acccess to creative and expressive arts. Furthermore, we would advocate that a central component of a statement of common outcomes would be a guarantee that all young people would have access to a reasonable and adequate livelihood.

How can educational programs deal meaningfully with the question of livelihood? A debate about economic developments, the future of paid employment and the distribution of wealth has been developing rapidly in recent years (see, for example, Crough et al. 1980 and Jones 1982). Much of this debate involves issues and struggles that go well beyond the sphere of education. Yet, the school-leavers of 1990 are about to enter secondary schools now. Already some schools are initiating projects which are directly concerned with the question of livelihood. Four examples can be given:

(a) community based research. In Victoria at least, there has been considerable interest in involving students in community based research projects. The topic of research has varied from school to school, but there has been a consistent emphasis on studying local social issues, including the decline of existing areas of employment and the prospects for new types of paid jobs to be established. In some cases this has culminated in the production of reports which have been presented to government departments;

(b) employment initiatives programs. The Employment Initiatives Program in Victoria (now replaced by Commonwealth programs) has enabled some schools to obtain funding for projects which allow them to provide paid employment for school leavers and other local, unemployed people. These projects usually involve a training component in which students can participate;

(c) productive enterprise. Some schools have encouraged their students to

develop the skills, facilities and organisation necessary for them to provide goods and services to community groups, other schools, or the public at large. These projects have tended to focus on activities such as recreation, printing, childcare, catering and crafts of one sort of another;

(d) co-operatives. Arising out of these projects, these has been some interest in the prospect that a school might either develop close links with neighbourhood work co-operatives, or perhaps even establish a co-operative that would be linked directly with the school itself.

Each of these types of activities clearly raises many questions. However, we believe that they are useful examples of programs which should be considered. Each is clearly oriented towards the issue of how young people are to obtain a livelihood, given the existing process of change in social and economic structures.

Conclusion

Social division is a persistent feature of Australian society, with severe consequences for those who happen to be on the receiving end of material and social exploitation. Concern about social division and the prospects for educational equality have been central to debates in the education arena for the past decade, yet little progress has been made in altering the established patterns of educational outcomes. The present social and economic crisis adds to the urgency with which these issues need to be confronted. We hope that the analytic framework outlined here, and the recasting of the agenda which it implies, will contribute to more effective action on specific issues affecting the organisation of schooling and the treatment of students, and to the development of programs which will promote *social* equality and access for all young people to an adequate livelihood.

Notes

1 We owe a considerable debt to our colleagues with whom we have worked over the last two years, especially Peter Dwyer, Sally Ingleton and Robyn Maxwell.

2 See, for example, the reports of the Poverty Commission (1975), Martin (1978), Connell et al. (1982) and the Galbally Report (1978).

3 Some examples of programs designed to counter sexism in Victoria are: Equal Opportunity Project (BRUSEC); Gippsland Career Opportunity for Girls Project; Girls Apprenticeship Programme.

4 There are clear links between this and the matters discussed by Sennett & Cobb (1973) and Rubin (1976).

5 For our purposes here, we characterise patriarchal society as one in which masculine experience forms the basis of public/formal knowledge and practice and in which women are systematically discriminated against on the basis of their gender. Capitalist society, we characterise as one in which the means of production are controlled by a small group and where the majority of the population rely on the sale of their labour power to gain a livelihood.

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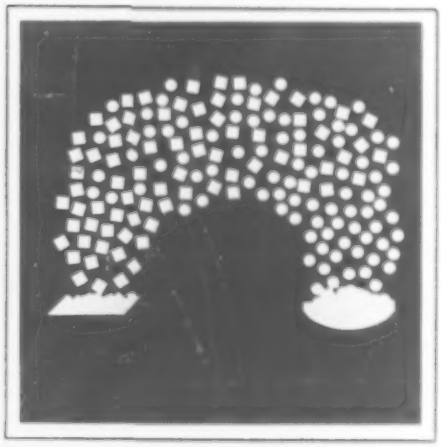

Bessant, B., & Spaull, A. *Politics of Schooling*. Pitman, Melbourne, 1976.
This book is principally concerned with processes of decision making in Australian education since World War II. Its essential argument is that education, or more correctly schooling, should not be seen in isolation from the social and political context in which educational decisions are made.

Bullough, R. V., Jr, Gitlin, A. D., & Goldstein, S. L. 'Ideology, teacher role, and resistance'. *Teachers College Record*, vol. 86, no. 2, 1984, pp. 339–58.
This important paper draws upon ethnographic research in schools in order to explore the concept of teacher role as experienced by classroom teachers. The authors argue that common understandings of what it means to be a teacher are influenced by a combination of technocratic and public servant mentalities. They conclude that a more fulfilling, less passive conception of teacher role is required in schools and that teachers must critically examine their own teaching practices and work with other teachers to foster a more emancipatory role for themselves.

Connell, R. *Teacher's Work*. George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1985.
Drawing upon the extensive data that was collected by the authors of *Making the Difference*, Connell closely analyses the way in which the classroom relationships that teachers work to establish with their pupils are connected to structures of class and gender. The role of teachers in the reproduction of social inequalities through education is examined, along with the ideals of teachers and their part in educational reform.

Connell, R. W., Ashenden, D. J., Kessler, S. & Dowsett, G. W., *Making the Difference: Schools, Families and Social Division*. George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1982.
The authors of this influential book draw upon extensive ethnographic research in public and elite private schools to examine the part played by schooling in the production of educational and social inequalities.

Dwyer, P., Wilson, B., & Woock, R. *Confronting School and Work: Youth and Class Cultures in Australia*. George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1984.
The significance for young people of current economic and social change is examined in this book. In particular, the authors are concerned about linkages between schooling and the labour market and the manner in which Australian society is structured in ways which disadvantage certain classes and cultural groups. The book concludes with an examination of proposals to reform education and makes recommendations for future policy planning.

Foster, L. *Australian Education: A Sociological Perspective*. Prentice-Hall, Sydney, 1981.
This book, written specifically for Australian students of sociology of education, takes as a starting point the proposition that sociological understanding may stimulate social action and lead to social reform. Readers are introduced to a variety of theoretical frameworks which are useful to the book's main purpose of examining the linkages between Australian society and education. It is an excellent source book and may be used selectively to illuminate particular theories, themes or interests in the sociology of education.

Giroux, H. *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition*. Bergin & Garvey, Massachusetts, 1983.
This book surveys and critiques a broad range of literature in radical sociology of education. Giroux is particularly critical, in certain respects, of reproduction theories of education, and argues that schools must be seen as sites of social and ideological struggle. Perhaps the most important aspect of the book, however, is its discussion of the principles that would inform a radical pedagogy.

Grace, G. *Teachers, Ideology and Control*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1978.
Generally regarded as one of the best studies published of teachers in working-class schools, this very readable book examines the contemporary situation of inner urban schools in Britain from a historical perspective. The author helps us understand the difficulty and complexity of teaching, the ideological construction of the notion of 'good teacher', and the nature of social control that is implicit in contemporary schooling.

Hall, S. *A Review of the Course* (E202 Schooling and Society, Unit 32), The Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1977.
As the final unit in a very successful Open University course this booklet assumes some knowledge of reproduction theory, theories of school and society, and the work of authors such as Bowles & Gintis, Bourdieu, and Bernstein. It summarises and comments on a number of ways of examining the connections between schooling and society.

Sennett, R., & Cobb, J. *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, Vintage Books, New York, 1972.
This American book provides general background discussion on working-class culture, cultural hegemony, and cultural discrimination. The central theme is that capitalist society is so structured as to perpetuate class injustice.

Wood, G. H. 'Schooling in a democracy: Transformation or reproduction?' *Educational Theory*, vol. 34, no. 3, 1984, pp. 219–34.
Competing versions of democracy are discussed in this paper. Wood argues that the version that is presented in schooling is limited and flawed by its narrow conception of representative participation. He concludes that schools should be places in which democratic processes should involve direct participation and which should foster more complete democratic participation in a broader sense. This has important implications both for practices of schooling and for curriculum.

About the author

Lawrence Angus taught in several public and private schools in South Australia, Victoria and the United Kingdom before joining Deakin University in 1983. His principal academic interest is in critical approaches to educational administration, with particular emphasis upon the influence of practices of curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation in the construction and legitimation of forms of culture and knowledge. His related empirical work has embraced a number of areas, including the restructure of educational management and provision in Victoria, classroom teaching and curricular practices, Catholic education, pupil participation in schooling, and community involvement in education.

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